Pedagogical Instruction for Beginning Male Singers Addressed Through Analysis and Application of Stephen Foster's Song Repertoire

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PEDAGOGICAL INSTRUCTION FOR BEGINNING MALE SINGERS ADDRESSED THROUGH ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION OF STEPHEN FOSTER’S SONG REPERTOIRE

By

Jeffrey James Wienand

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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the requirements for the degree of
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THROUGH ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION OF STEPHEN FOSTER’S SONG
REPERTOIRE

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This thesis is designed to aid teachers in choosing repertoire for students, analyzing pedagogical appeal of repertoire selections, and applying them to a technical regimen. Creating a pedagogical analysis of a song prior to assigning it to a student will aid in the effectiveness of technique acquisition and application. This essay employs this strategy using seven songs of Stephen Foster and applying them to hypothetical students. These students are limited to male singers at a beginning level.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to Stephen Foster</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocal Pedagogy and Song Literature</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical and Biographical Literature</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stephen Foster Musical Editions</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recordings of Stephen Foster’s Songs</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods Overview</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selection of Repertoire</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structure of the Song Chapters</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>HARD TIMES COME AGAIN NO MORE</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Features Chart</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical Analysis</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>GENTLE LENA CLARE</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Features Chart</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical Analysis</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>KATY BELL</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Features Chart</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical Analysis</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>LINGER IN BLISSFUL REPOSE</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Features Chart</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical Analysis</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>OPEN THY LATTICE, LOVE</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Features Chart</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical Analysis</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 THERE ARE PLENTY OF FISH IN THE SEA………………  89
Musical Features Chart ........................................ 89
Pedagogical Analysis .......................................... 90
Training .......................................................... 93

10 AH, MAY THE RED ROSE LIVE ALWAY .................. 102
Musical Features Chart ........................................ 102
Pedagogical Analysis .......................................... 103
Training .......................................................... 106

11 CONCLUSION.................................................. 112

APPENDIX 1..................................................... 114

GLOSSARY OF FIGURES.......................................... 116

BIBLIOGRAPHY..................................................... 117
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every voice teacher strives to create efficient structure within their studio. The common approach for a lesson consists of an even division of warm-up/technical exercises and repertoire. In this model, a seemingly exhaustive amount of time is spent singing musical material that is never designed for public consumption. Vocal exercises and methodologies have long been an important training tool towards the achievement of proper vocal technique. In this writer’s teaching experience - as well as observation of the teaching of others - it appears that the knowledge gleaned from these methodologies and exercises often does not apply to the repertoire being studied. Progress in technical acquisition is halted or diminished once the repertoire is introduced, or a different set of technical skills are required creating an inefficient learning structure.

The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate how specific vocal literature can be combined with exercises and technical training to create a more effective vocal training regimen. An abundance of appealing vocal literature exists that can foster improvement for beginning singers by bridging the gaps between technical exercise, and its application in singing repertoire. Each of the song selections studied will focus on a specific area of vocal improvement with vocal exercises and instructional guides to accompany each song.

The literature that will be studied in this essay is by Stephen Collins Foster. Stephen Foster (1826 – 1864) was one of America’s first notable song composers. Carol Kimball, in her book *Song: A Guide to Style and Literature*, states: “Foster’s songs
should not be dismissed, for they were influential in shaping the solo literature of the United States. His songs influenced the music of later composers, including George Gershwin and Charles Ives.”¹ His musical settings seem to find the heart of the poetry, the text and melodies are simple yet manage to infuse great weight and depth to the mood of the text. In general, the vocal ranges are manageable, melodies are fluid and beautiful, harmonies are simple yet interesting, rhythmic figures are simple, and the form is usually strophic or makes use of a repeated verse/chorus. These characteristics make his songs valuable for teaching younger students, but yet retain enough depth and character to be performed effectively by professional singers. At the beginning of each song chapter, a chart will provide a list of musical characteristics, along with the song’s key to aide in assignment towards a specific student.

The first three chapters of this essay contains introductory material, current literature pertaining to this topic, and a methodology of the research that was completed - including the process used for compiling the information in this essay. Chapters four through ten each focus on a specific Stephen Foster song. Each of these latter chapters will begin with a brief historical background on the song, and a chart of musical characteristics contained therein. A pedagogical analysis provides an application for improving skills and technique, as well as identifying the areas of the song that may prove difficult for a young singer. A list of objectives is provided after the pedagogical analysis. Next, a training portion contains a series of exercises and methodologies to aid in the mastery of these objectives and a process to be applied to the repertoire selection.

Delimitations

When working with the singing voice, there are many factors to consider, including voice part, sex, age, style, and experience levels, therefore, this essay will not focus on all aspects of singing or singers. For the purpose of this essay, the literature has been narrowed to a selection of songs by Stephen Collins Foster. Much of Stephen Foster’s music was originally written for male singers, hence the only voice parts that will be addressed in this essay will be for the male voice. The essay is also designed to train beginning to intermediate singers, and consequently, an age range between sixteen and twenty years of age is also being placed on the intended vocal subjects of this study. Because of this demographic, the selected range of students to which this literature will be applied is also delimited. This is not to imply that beginning singers older or younger than this age group would not have similar technical advancements if brought through the same protocol, it simply narrows the focus to eliminate those singers whose voices are still in transition, or those who have reached full vocal maturity and display more advanced technical proficiencies. Males between sixteen and twenty years of age are generally experiencing their first formal study in classical vocal techniques. It is to this age group for whom this essay topic is intended.

This essay does not encompass every aspect of Foster’s writing. Stephen Foster lived in an uneasy period of American history. Much of his song output is racially charged in the eyes of today’s society. His most prolific success was in writing music for the Minstrel Shows that were popular in the Southern United States during the pre-Civil War era. Blackface Minstrelsy was a racist art form in which performers, dressed as black slaves, would sing songs in a manner that was both mocking and cruel as white
performers acted as buffoons and clowns to portray slave life on a southern plantation. Minstrel shows originated from a practice of circus clowns who would ride around on horses singing “Negro-like songs.” Foster’s music found great success in this medium. Although much of his chosen texts would be considered racist in today’s world, a closer look discovers that the racist sentiment is often lost. His songs show a great sympathy and inward look towards the lives of the plantation slave, making his music a catalyst for reform directed at an audience who is deeply opposed to his views.

Rather than writing nostalgically for an old South (it was, after all, the present day for him), or trivializing the hardships of slavery, Foster sought to humanize the characters in his songs, to have them care for one another, and to convey a sense that all people—regardless of their ethnic identities or social and economic class—share the same longings and needs for family and home. He instructed white performers of his songs not to mock slaves but to get their audiences to feel compassion for them. In his own words, he sought to "build up taste...among refined people by making words suitable to their taste, instead of the trashy and really offensive words which belong to some songs of that order." Stephen Foster was a man with a mission, to reform black-face minstrelsy, then the most pervasive and powerful force in American popular culture.

Upon hearing Foster’s ballad “Old Uncle Ned” Frederick Douglass remarked that it had the ability to “awaken sympathies for the slave.” Ken Emerson writes in his book *Doo-Dah!: Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture*, “…‘My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight' was inspired by an abolitionist novel and express deep sympathy for

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enslaved African Americans – a sympathy Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Dubois saluted.” ⁴

It is well documented which of Stephen Foster’s songs were published with the intent of being included in Minstrel shows, but these songs will not be included in this essay. The matter of race relations and Foster’s music can be explored in alternative sources (such as *Doo-dah!: Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture*, by Ken Emerson, *Imitation Nation: Blackface Minstrelsy and the making of African American Selfhood in “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,”* an article by Jason Richards, or *Passing for Black: Coon Songs and the Performance of Race*, by P.R. Schroeder).

**Introduction to Stephen Foster**

Stephen Foster’s life is well documented in various biographies, websites, and other sources, and thus the biographical portion of this essay will be concise. This section is intended to provide a basic understanding of Foster’s life as a composer through his songs and inspirations. The goal of which is to gain a better understanding of the selected repertoire for a fully informed performance. All pedagogical remarks about a song should not interfere with an appropriate interpretation of it. Understanding the key historical climates and motivations that lay behind Foster’s compositions will help to justify later remarks in the essay.

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Foster’s Early Life and Development

Stephen Foster was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1826. He was the ninth of ten children, but was raised as the “baby” when the youngest child died at an early age. His parents were not affluent but were able to provide amply for their children. The young Stephen was privately tutored and became well-educated.⁵

Foster’s neighborhood friends played a large role in his life. As a teenager Foster and his brother Morrison were part of a circle of friends that called themselves the “Knights of the Square Table,” Their group was evidently parodying the novels of Sir Walter Scott.⁶ These young men grew to be influential in Foster’s life, and it was through an association with them that Foster’s musical career began. The aptly named “Nice Young Men” (Stephen wrote a poem, about his friends titled “Nice Young Men”) included Charles Shiras, Andrew Robison, Charles Rahm, and Harvey Davis, along with Stephen and his brother Morrison. Foster used these interactions as the basis for the first two songs he composed.

“Open Thy Lattice, Love” was Stephen’s first song to be published. George Willig of Philadelphia published the song with its dedication to Susan Petland, a neighbor of the Fosters who would later marry Stephen’s boyhood friend Andrew Robinson. This song, with text by George Morris, as well as his second, the popular “Oh, Susanna” (text by Stephen Foster), were both serenades, meant to be sung as innocent love songs (or at


least love song parodies). Susan Petland, though significantly younger than Foster and company, probably made a perfect audience for the songs.  

Stephen’s early musical training came from Henry Kleber, described as “an accomplished and versatile musician who eventually exerted a major influence on Pittsburgh's musical life as a performer, composer, music merchant, impresario, and teacher.” It is likely that Kleber had a hand in helping Stephen to finalize these songs for publication, as is implied by John Tasker Howard. As Howard discusses while analyzing the original Foster score and the published version of “Open Thy Lattice, Love:”

An idea of Stephen’s musicianship at this time may be gained from comparison of the original manuscript of “Open Thy Lattice” with the first edition of the published version. The voice part—the melody—is identical in both, but the accompaniment differs materially. In some cases the harmonization has been changed, and often the accompanying figuration has been altered. Some of Stephen’s elaborations in the piano part were fussy and awkward, and these are removed in the published copy.

Although Stephen’s musical skills had not completely matured, he found success with the publication of “Oh, Susanna.”

“Oh, Susanna” combined multiple styles of popular music from the time. The text was derived from the popular “Ethiopian Songs” that had started to spur on the art-form of blackface minstrelsy. However, the melodic and rhythmic nature of the song came from the European polka which, at the time, was considered a much more cultivated form of music. The juxtaposition of these musical styles combined with the

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text, a sweet loving serenade done in a “negro dialect,” created a comical contrast. “Oh, Susanna” was not immediately published. Austin additionally notes, “the idea of publishing ‘Susanna’ and ‘Lou’sianna Belle’ seems to have occurred to Foster only after the songs had circulated throughout his circle of friends. Even then he was not eager, and thought this boyish fun had not been meant for the public.”10 Peters Publishing Co. paid Stephen Foster one-hundred dollars for the rights to “Oh, Susanna.” This song, along with a handful of other works Foster had completed, was published in 1848. “Oh, Susanna” was immediately picked up by travelling minstrel groups including The Christy Minstrels. “‘Susanna’… ranked with ‘Zip Coon’ as nationwide favorites.”11 Peters publishing made a profit of $10,000 from “Susanna.” This established Stephen Foster and his ‘Susanna,’ as well-known names throughout America by 1850.

Stephen’s Personal Life and Familial Influences

Stephen began his professional life in Cincinnati working as a bookkeeper for his brother Dunning’s steamboat firm prior to the publication of “Oh, Susanna,” while he was twenty years old. Stephen’s career as a bookkeeper was fairly short lived, and he returned to Pittsburgh in 1850. Emerson states, “Stephen Foster’s apron string attachment to his family, the youngest child’s reluctance if not outright refusal to separate, had long been evident in his life and would soon become obvious in his music, such as the songs “Old Folks at Home,” and “My Old Kentucky Home.” It may have been on the account of Jane Denny McDowell that Foster had returned to Pittsburgh.”12

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Jane McDowell and Stephen Foster married in the same year as Foster’s return to Pittsburgh (1850), and, by 1851, their daughter Marion Foster was born. These were formative years for Foster, and it was at this point that he decided to make song writing his career. The years 1850 and 1851 were the most significant of his career with regard to his song publications, and his songs, which to this point were mostly silly or comical, developed into more sentimental parlor songs. Although Stephen and Jane had an unstable marriage (separating and re-uniting several times in the fourteen years of their marriage) his love for his wife was obvious through his songs.

It is not to be doubted that Stephen loved Jane – at least as much as his temperament would allow of such an attachment. The several songs in which he used her name bear witness to his affection. It may be observed that all of these songs were published, and probably written and composed after his marriage, none of them were issued during courtship – “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair” (1854), “Jennie’s own Scottisch” (1854), “Jenny’s Coming o’er the Green” (1860), “Little Jenny Dow” (1862), “Jenny June” (1863).13

Jane is undoubtedly the most recurring character in Foster’s songs. In an interview for the Pittsburgh Press on September 12, 1900 Marion Foster recalled her relationship with father, as quoted in Howard’s biography:

I was his pet. He took me everywhere with him, and I was the only one allowed to invade the sanctity of his den where he wrote his songs. I could not quite understand his sudden change from my gay, almost childlike companion of the street, to the thoughtful, preoccupied, almost stern man in the study. He could not bear the slightest noise or interruption in his work. I soon learned to respect his “composing moods” and not to interrupt him while at work.”14


In addition, Stephen wrote many songs about Southern plantation life and Southern geographical sites, but he visited the South only once in his life. Stephen, Morrison, Jane, Marion, Stephen’s childhood friend Andrew Robinson and his wife Susan (Petland), and other family and friends travelled by steamboat, provided by his brother Dunning, to New Orleans. It was during this trip that Foster observed Southern life; he had already written songs about Southern plantation life but had himself never witnessed. Morrison Foster wrote: “On this voyage Stephen observed a good many incidents of Southern life, which afterwards utilized as points for poetic simile in songs.”

In 1853 Jane left Stephen and moved to Lewistown, Pennsylvania, which prompted Stephen to move closer to his publisher, Firth, Pond and Co., in New York City, one of the largest publishing companies in the United States. It is well documented that Jane did not approve of Stephen’s songwriting and wished that he would assume another profession. The separation continued for the remainder of Stephen’s life, although they never divorced, they would reconcile for periods of time over the next eleven years.

Stephen’s Career and Professional Influences

Stephen had many professional influences. This section, however, will focus primarily on those who held the most importance: Stephen’s publisher Firth, Pond and Co., a part time lyricist George Cooper, and minstrel performers Dan Emmett and E.P.

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Christy. Other professional influences on Stephen and his work will be addressed in the musical sections of this essay.

As Stephen came to the realization that his songs were profiting everyone but himself, he made the decision to change publishers. In 1849, Foster was working with Firth, Pond and Co. of New York City. By September 12 of that year a deal was struck in a letter from Firth, Pond and Co. to Stephen:

Your favor of the 8th inst. Is received and we hasten to reply. We will accept the proposition therein made, viz. to allow you two cents upon every copy of your future publications by our house, after the expenses of publication are paid...It is also advisable to compose only such pieces as are likely both in the sentiment & melody to take the public taste.16

Firth, Pond and Co. was the largest publisher of Foster’s music during his lifetime, and the company was faithful and fair to Foster throughout his life. In 1863, the year before Foster’s death, Firth and Pond went their separate ways and the company became only William A. Pond & Co. William A. Pond & Co. published only one Stephen Foster song, “Beautiful Dreamer,” on March 10, 1864 perhaps only to exploit the composer’s death.17

Dan Emmett and E.P. Christy became two minstrel performers with the most influence on Foster’s work. Daniel Decatur Emmett was the headman for the Virginia Minstrels, and although disputed by Christy, Emmett was considered the originator of the minstrel shows. Emmett’s direct involvement with Foster is not clear, however, he was a fellow composer who brought about the musical styles and theatrical performances for which Foster composed.

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E.P. Christy of the Christy Minstrels was more personally involved with Foster, and Stephen often presented Christy with the rights to his songs before they were published by Firth, Pond and Co., as evidenced in this letter from Stephen to Christy:

Dear Sir:

I have received a letter from Messrs. Firth, Pond and Co. stating that they have copy-righted a new song of mine (“Oh! Boys, carry me ‘long”) but will not be able to issue it for some little time yet, owing to other engagements. This will give me time to send you the m.s. [manuscript] and allow you the privilege of singing it for at least two weeks, and probably a month before it is issued, or before any other band gets it (unless they catch it up from you). If you send me 10$ immediately for this privilege I pledge myself, as a gentleman of the old school, to give you the m.s. I have written to F.P. and Co. not to publish till they hear from me again…If you accept my proposition I will make it a point to notify you hereafter when I have a new song and send you the m.s. on the same terms, reserving to myself in all cases the exclusive privilege of publishing…18

Christy accepted Foster’s proposition and the two became part-time business associates.

The Christy Minstrels promoted themselves as the originators of Foster’s music, and Foster’s music was increasingly heard throughout the United States. In 1852, Foster sold the right for Christy to claim “Old Folks at Home” as his own composition. Foster did not wish to have his name associated with minstrelsy, although he did enjoy the monetary benefits of its performance.19

Foster’s late life was a difficult one, as he earned little money and began to drink heavily. His closest friend at the time was a young lyricist, George Cooper, who collaborated with Foster regularly. In the last two years of his life Foster’s publications


were almost entirely written with lyrics by George Cooper. In all, twenty-three songs were published with lyrics by Cooper, but none met the same popularity of Foster’s early songs. The rights to these songs were often sold immediately upon completion, for far less than they were worth.20 In 1864 Stephen, suffering from a fever, slipped and fell and cut open his throat on a washbasin or chamber pot. Foster was admitted to Bellvue Hospital where his wounds were dressed. He died a short time later from unknown complications. Heart attack, pulmonary embolism, stroke, and heart arrhythmia are all possible causes of death. George Cooper wrote to Morrison Foster, “Your brother Stephen I am sorry to inform you is lying in Bellevue Hospital in this city very sick. He desires me to ask you to send him some pecuniary assistance, as his means are very low. If possible, he would like to see you in person.”21 Unfortunately Morrison never made it to New York to see his brother alive. Stephen passed away on January 13, 1864, three days after arriving at Bellevue Hospital.


CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The preponderance of this essay is written as a compilation of pedagogical information to be utilized in such a way that it promotes specific strategies for technical improvement in alliance with application of Stephen Foster song repertoire. Literary sources and supporting materials used include well-known and respected textbooks and scholarly articles.

Much work has been done researching Stephen Foster’s life and songs. His melodies are often printed in collections of songs for beginners, including the popular *First Book of Solos* series by Joan Frey Boytim.\(^\text{22}\) However, research into why Stephen Foster’s songs seem particularly effective for beginning voices and recommendations on how to implement them as a training tool is not widely published. The following chapter is presented to familiarize the reader with the literature that will be used throughout this essay as well as to explore research that has been done on topics relative to pedagogy implementing the songs of Stephen Foster.

**Vocal Pedagogy and Song Literature**

There is a considerable amount of literature on the subjects of vocal pedagogy and song repertoire but it is often difficult to narrow the usage of these texts. Much of this essay involves the beginning voice and the techniques that are most applicable to Stephen Foster’s songs. It will contain much pedagogical information from textbooks, training

manuals, books of vocal exercises, and prominent methodologies. There will also be a significant contribution to this essay from sources on song repertoire, including literature reviews, doctoral theses/dissertations, scholarly essays, and textbooks. These sources are primarily written to address performance aspects of various styles of song literature; they are neither historical nor biographical in nature. Each of the following sources describes the structure of singing in a myriad of ways.

*The Structure of Singing*, by Richard Miller, is largely regarded as one of the most respected texts on vocal pedagogy. Miller describes the physiology related to singing in great detail and describes its use in creating healthful phonation in students. The book also includes information on registration, breath control, and other vocal concepts that will be included in this essay. Miller offers exercises for each vocal issue that he discusses. These exercises will be related to Foster’s music to bolster the music’s pedagogical merit.23

Scott McCoy’s, *Your Voice: An Inside View*, offers another perspective on the subject. This book’s greatest point is a clear and extensive explanation of the anatomical make-up of the entire vocal mechanism: respiratory anatomy, laryngeal anatomy, phonatory structures, and articulators, all of which are diagramed with a list of their functions and attachments. This book also includes a chapter that is dedicated to the physics of sound.24

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Janice Chapman’s *Singing and Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice*, is much more focused on the practical aspects of teaching. Case studies are examined and explained. Chapman’s techniques for addressing vocal issues are more holistic (as indicated by the title) than in either McCoy’s or Miller’s books; anatomy and physiology of vocal mechanics are included, but to a lesser degree than the other authors. For many issues, Chapman offers clear suggestions for solving a student’s problem through exercises and dialogues. These examples will be examined to make clear comparisons with extracts from Foster’s songs.²⁵

Other vocal pedagogy resources will be utilized in this essay when necessary. These sources include: *The Private Voice Studio Handbook: A Guide to All Aspects of Teaching* by Joan Frey Boytim,²⁶ *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults: A Manual for Teachers of Singers* by James C. McKinney,²⁷ *Singing: The Mechanism and the Technic* by William Vennard,²⁸ *The Four Voices of Man* by Jerome Hines,²⁹ and *Solutions for Singers* by Richard Miller.³⁰ Each of these sources offers unique and interesting perspectives on the varied aspects of training the singing voice.

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Trusted vocal methodologies will also play an important role in this essay. Mathilde Marchesi’s, *Bel Canto: A Theoretical & Practical Vocal Method*, is widely regarded as a cornerstone in vocal pedagogy literature. The methods start with emission of the voice through chromatic intervals, which then expand. The next chapter contains exercises for blending the registers, which will be particularly relevant to this study within the chapter on the same topic. Other subjects covered through exercises are flexibility, *messa di voce*, practicing trills, and also exercises that include, but are not limited to, the musical techniques of *portamento*, *sostenuto*, *arpeggi*, and accents. Each of these tailored exercises will be compared to melodic contours and musical gestures found in Foster’s songs. Conclusions on similarities and usefulness will be discussed.

Other vocal methods will also be examined in this essay, each of which includes exercises designed to correct vocal issues in a manner similar to Marchesi’s methodology. These sources will include *The Art of Singing* by William Shakespeare, *Practical Method for Italian Singing* by Nicola Vaccai, *Daily Exercises on Singing* by Francesco Lamperti, and *The Estelle Liebling Vocal Course* by Estelle Liebling. These methods contain various exercises that aid singers through vocal issues and will be applied in a manner similar to that of Marchesi as described above.

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The song literature implemented in this essay will offer suggestions for proper performance of Foster’s music. Carol Kimball’s *Song: A Guide to Style and Literature* is one of the most respected books on song literature. The information in this book is brief but useful. Kimball writes succinctly about three of Foster’s songs, “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair,” “Beautiful Dreamer,” and “Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway!” The short, three-page section on Foster offers numerous quotable and well-informed passages, including a guide to style and convergence of text and harmony.


Samantha Mowery compiled a full catalog of Stephen Foster’s music in her 2009 DMA essay, *Stephen Foster and American Song*. The essays catalog includes titles, copyright, range, tessitura, key, and song description. In the essay Mowery also includes useful information on Foster’s history, songwriting styles, relationships, and influences.

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38 Samantha Mowery. *Stephen Foster and American Song*. (Ohio State University, 2009).
The final chapter in the essay is an in-depth historical and performance study of five songs.

**Historical and Biographical Literature**

Stephen Foster’s life is well-documented as was the social climate in which he lived. As discussed prior, finding sources on Foster’s life is not difficult, and there are a few quite extensive biographies written on the subject of Stephen Foster. His songs were published primarily during his lifetime and a clear chronicle of his works has been compiled. The literature offers a great deal of insight into the Foster’s compositional process and his intent for his music. The goal in reading biographies of any composer is to gain an understanding of historical importance and compositional intent of their music to inform and enhance performance.

One of the most-respected biographies on Stephen Foster is Evelyn P. Mournewick’s *Chronicles of Stephen Foster’s Family*, which is generally considered to be the most accurate source for biographical information on Stephen Foster. Evelyn Mournewick was Foster’s niece, the daughter of his brother Morrison. While the biographical information regarding Stephen’s life and family is thoroughly covered in this book it is weaker in areas concerning Stephen’s music.

“Susanna,” “Jeanie,” and “The Old Folks at Home:” *The Songs of Stephen C. Foster from His Time to Ours* by William W. Austin is a detailed biography that deals specifically with Foster’s music. His life is examined in the book but it is done so in

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order to understand his songs. The book is organized into three basic sections: Comic Songs (such as “Oh! Susanna”), Parlour Ballads (“Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair”), and Pathetic Plantation Songs (“The Old Folks at Home”). Austin examines the historical climate and life events that inspired the music. This source contains relevant information that furthers the understanding of Foster’s songs, which, in turn, helps to inform performances.

Ken Emerson is one of the world’s foremost authorities on Stephen Foster. His biography “Doo-Dah!: Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture is an important publication on the subject of Stephen Foster. Emerson has written for many major publications including the New York Times, Boston Globe, The Washington Post, and The Wall Street Journal, often dealing with the subjects of American culture and music. This expertise lends itself well to the subject matter covered in this essay. “Doo-Dah! Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture details the historical climate of the nineteenth century and how Foster fit into it. There is a great focus on Foster’s music and how it changed American culture and ultimately American Song.

Other biographical sources will be implemented in this essay, including: Stephen Collins Foster: A Biography by Harold Vincent Milligan, Panorama of American Popular Music: The Story of Our National Ballads and Folk Songs—The Songs of Tin

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Stephen Foster Musical Editions

There are a number of publications currently available of Foster’s songs, ranging from completely altered piano parts, to key alterations, and voice changing. Multiple publications will be used throughout this essay, most of which are readily available. Each song selection will include a brief explanation why the edition was chosen and how it may differ from the original publication. Some of Foster’s songs have been edited to conform to current performance practices, for example, textual alterations or four-part choruses condensed into solo voice. This literature is examined to find the most useful examples of Foster’s writing to use for pedagogical purposes and effective performance.

The most widely available edition of Stephen Foster songs is one published by Dover Publishing, Inc. Stephen Foster Song Book: Original Sheet Music for 40 Songs by Stephen Collins Foster is a collection of forty of Foster’s more popular songs. While most of them are from the parlor-song genre, a few “plantation” or “Ethiopian” songs are included in this publication. The Dover publication has reprinted the original scores published during Foster’s life with a few exceptions that were published posthumously. The score also includes prints of the original covers, which furnishes a great deal of information about how these songs were advertised. The publication is accurate and

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reliable when it comes to the music and is thus an invaluable source. Nonetheless, with only forty songs published, it is not exhaustive. The final section of this publication does include notes regarding historical significance of each of the forty songs.45

*The Melodies of Stephen C. Foster, Pittsburgh Edition*, is a collection published by T.M. Walker. This collection, copyrighted in 1908, contains a Forward written in memoriam. It comments on Foster’s work with a unique perspective, due to the fact that it is not as far-removed from Foster’s lifetime as are many more current publications. This collection of songs is nearly exhaustive, as it contains 138 songs, fifteen hymns, and five instrumental pieces. The Pittsburgh Edition of Foster’s songs, however, is less accessible for the purposes of this essay, and will be used only as an alternate when more readily available and respectable sources cannot be procured. There are only 500 copies of the Pittsburgh Edition of Foster’s songs.46

The Hal Leonard Publication, *The Songs of Stephen Foster*, is another easily accessible collection of Foster’s songs. It contains thirty of Foster’s most famous compositions. However, each is also contained in the Dover edition of Foster songs, and will not be used in this study for that reason. For those looking for a collection of songs suitable for performance the Hal Leonard publication is a perfectly viable source.47

The University of Pittsburgh published a collection of Foster’s songs, *Stephen Collins Foster: Sixty Favorite Songs*. This collection includes fine attention to editorial details. According to the Preface: “Changes to the music have been made to correct


mistakes and make the presentation more consistent. Such changes include regularizing the placement of expression marks, dynamics, and fermatas; making parallel passages uniform; and correcting faulty spelling, punctuation, and text underlay.”48 This edition also alters the text of Foster’s songs to make them more acceptable for modern performance. For this paper, this edition will be used, often as a comparison to original prints to determine the best and most effective use of Foster’s music.49

*A Treasury of Stephen Foster*, by Random House Publishers features fifty Foster songs. The edition is not currently in print, and, therefore, it is not as accessible to the public as other song collections. Unless there is no other source for a specific song, this edition will not be used.50

**Recordings of Stephen Foster’s Songs**

Few solo classical singers have recorded Stephen Foster songs, but they are often sung as encores at recitals and a few exist as single tracks on classical recordings. Choral transcriptions of Stephen Foster’s songs are more prevalent. A fairly comprehensive discography exists in Ken Emerson’s *Doo-Dah! Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture*. An Annotated Discography is included at the end of this document in Appendix 1. It extracts many entries from Emerson’s biography as well as expanding it to include more recent and overlooked

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recordings. These recordings can be examined and used as a guide to a stylistic appropriate performance. They may also serve to be advantageous in noting any apparent difficulties in the singers’ performances which could aid in a pedagogical understanding of the work.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Methods Overview

The vocal issues addressed in this paper have been chosen and formatted in a manner consistent with standard pedagogical resources and methodologies. It is not suggested that a student would master one technique before moving on to the next, however, a logical progression still occurs within the training of the singing voice, one that is often followed in pedagogical studies and vocal training methods.\textsuperscript{51} As progression continues, prior techniques will be reviewed as relevant to the song being addressed. It is the hope of the author that this essay can help to improve alignment of technical exercises and repertoire selection, thus aiding in a more efficient training progression. It is not, however, presumed that a student will master a specific technique within a single lesson or song.

Selection of Repertoire

Defining guidelines on choosing repertoire for beginning singers can be a difficult task. Because each voice is unique, each song provides unique challenges for a given student. A song that may be simple for one person might be challenging for another. One writer, Joan Frey Boytim, has been pivotal in choosing simple songs that work for many voice types and has compiled them in a popular series of song compilations - \textit{The First Book of Solos}. Boytim defines beginning repertoire:

\footnote{\textsuperscript{51} See Miller’s \textit{The Structure of Singing} (1996) or \textit{Solutions for Singers} (2004); also Shakespeare’s \textit{The Art of Singing}.}
Beginning literature needs to be limited in range and have a comfortable tessitura. There should be no excess of breath demands or extremes in tempo or dynamics. Songs should be at an easy level of musical difficulty with moderation in all areas. Short songs are desirable with slower learners as well as for other students as they learn the discipline of practicing and memorizing. Songs with movement and melodic skips are much easier for beginning students than slow, sustained pieces. The music can be challenging but not frustrating to the student.52

These guidelines help to define some general musical characteristics by which to choose beginning repertoire. In *First Book of Baritone/Bass Solos* Boytim explains that the songs have been chosen because they are short to medium in length, ranges are moderate, only occasionally extending to the top or bottom of the range of a typical voice. The accompaniments are not difficult and support vocal lines, songs are melodious, and texts are easy to understand.53 All of these guidelines will be taken into account when choosing Stephen Foster repertoire for this essay.

When choosing repertoire, it will be done so to fit specific vocal issues. Each song will be analyzed to discover the pedagogical potential. A training portion will then set up a guide to achieving a desired vocal technique and will explain how the song aids in this goal (more on this in the “Structure of the Song Chapters” portion of this essay). The chosen repertoire for each chapter will have distinguishing characteristics that work with the presented methodology and corrective exercises. The intent of these chapters is to allow technical abilities that have been acquired to be quickly integrated into song singing, so that the singer’s technique is applied and reinforced directly.


Structure of the Song Chapters

Each song chapter is broken into four separate sections; introductory material, basic musical features chart, pedagogical analysis, and training.

I. Introductory Material

The introduction will provide a small amount of background information that may be relevant to the performance of the song. This information may include historical relevance how the song was written, how audiences reacted to the song, where and when the song was performed, Foster’s reasons for composing the song (personal relations reflected in song, money earned for the composition, status achieved by composition), and lasting relevance (current performances or recordings, how the song has integrated into modern society). This information will help to increase the performers overall understanding of the piece and in some cases inform the accuracy of a performance interpretation.

II. Musical Features Chart

The Musical Features Chart allows teachers to make a quick reference to the song to determine if it is a good fit to their students. Each chart features seven categories:

1. Melody – A descriptive explanation of the contour of the vocal line, i.e. whether the line is conjunct or disjointed, contains occasional leaps, and if it remains in a comfortable tessitura.

2. Harmony – An analysis of basic chordal structures and harmonic rhythm to give an understanding of the harmonic complexity of a piece.
3. Rhythm - A description of the rhythmic component of the vocal line, this provides an idea of difficulty levels regarding note values and prosody.

4. Form – A description of the formal structure of the piece, to aid in memorization and communication of text.

5. Accompaniment – A description of the piano part, whether it is aiding the singer in harmonic aspects or melodic aspects, and the degree of difficulty in creating a unified ensemble.

6. Text – a brief description of the text to clarify the mood or content of the poetry.

7. Key – The original published key of the piece.

8. Range – The lowest and highest notes of the piece, which will aid in determining which voice type would best perform the song.

III. Pedagogical Analysis

The pedagogical analysis is a breakdown of the specific piece in order to identify musical figures that pose a specific technical difficulty, and, more importantly what specific traits allow them to aid in technical training. This section will be broken down into three subsections, each of which focuses on a specific musical trait that may offer difficulty to the student. The subsections include: Range and Registration, Vocal Line and Breath Management, and Communication and Performance.

*Range and Registration* will focus on the constraints and limitations set forth by the pitches of the song. A suggested voice part will be determined by the range and
tessitura. Possible pitfalls of registration will be discussed as well as vowel choices that may be advantageous or detrimental.

An analysis of vocal lines and breath management will determine the nature of the melodic line and how it can serve as a guide to advancing vocal technique. Once more, pitfalls will be determined and a suggested course of action will be discussed on how to aid the student through these difficulties. It will also help us to determine specific techniques that will be most useful in achieving a well-sung version of the song.

The Communication and Performance analysis will focus mainly on the text of the piece. A possible interpretation may be included, or an offering of context. Stephen Foster’s music is often repetitive, which leads to difficulties in creating contrast in the music and communication of the text. Differences in verse content may be discussed in this section to allow for a more meaningful interpretation. The analysis may lead to pursuing a more in-depth look into what musical elements should be addressed to further the story-telling components of the songs.

IV. Training

The pedagogical analysis will lead to achievable goals that will be set at the beginning of the section. The Training portion will serve as a guide to practical application of vocal techniques that are particularly suited to achieving the stated goals. Each individual piece assigned focuses on either a specific aspect of vocal technique or new adjustments in coordination.

Aspects of vocal technique that have been established as the goal in performing a song selection will then be explained and the student given a series of exercises to
achieve a desired result. Once the desired results are achieved in performing the exercises, the newly acquired techniques can then be transferred to the song in performance to ensure that technique maintains efficiency. A step-by-step process is set forth to achieve each technical goal set up in the chapter.
CHAPTER 4

Hard Times Come Again No More

“Hard Times Come Again No More” is a ballad which is based on the plights of the underprivileged class and economic frailty. The topics represented in this piece are weighty and ever relevant, with hopes that the hardships of life will go away and never return. The song requires a singer sensitive to this topic who can breathe compassion into Foster’s text. The text sways between two sentiments: the weariness of life, and hope for a better future. Foster’s accompaniment parallels these sentiments with a chordal march that contributes to a feeling of one’s drudging through life’s hardships. This somber mood quickly transitions, however, into a broken, more arpeggiated pattern that appears to free the singer of his burdens.

Musical Features Chart

<p>| Melody | Simple wave-like patterns; occasional repeated notes for emphasis; occasional small leaps, largest is an interval of a fourth |
| Harmony | Simple, contains only I, IV, V, V7, V7/V |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Simple, quarter-note and eighth-note patterns, occasional syncopation to imitate speech patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Verse/Chorus, contains four verses of changing text, chorus remains the same throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompaniment</td>
<td>Chordal and arpeggiated in different sections, harmonically supportive, no part doubling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Hopeful yet sad, an important juxtaposition between emotions must be brought out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Eb major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Eb3-Eb4, one octave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pedagogical Analysis**

**Range and Registration**

This song contains a range of an octave (Eb3-Eb4), which is an optimal range for a beginning baritone or bass/baritone, yet not too low for a tenor. It is recommended that this piece be sung by a baritone. The song maintains an extremely comfortable tessitura, pausing occasionally on C4 to increase tension prior to the conclusion of each line. The *primo passaggio* for many baritones lies usually between Bb3 and C4, and this transition is often weaker in beginning male voices. Many baritones tend to compensate for this weakness by increasing pressure of the vocalis muscle and forcing their voices into a somewhat more strident tone. However, “Hard Times Come Again No More” seems to counteract this natural tendency. The piece is marked *piano* throughout its entirety and
must be sung empathetically without the hard edges of vocal tension. The “Oh” which lays firmly in the *primo passaggio* of most baritones, is somewhat like a sigh, and leads to a descending line of thirds and seconds encompassing a fifth. The [o] is an open mouth space that allows the throat to open naturally and allows for the register transition to be accommodated. Since it is to be sung softly with pathos, the singer’s tendency will not be to strain, but to allow for air to flow naturally through the open space being created.

Eliminating the strain in the *primo passaggio* is of great importance to release the notes above. If a singer is compensating their vocal shifts with tension, transitions into the higher register will not be relaxed, and pose continuing issues. “Hard Times Come Again No More” contains an Eb4 in each chorus, which may present problems for some young baritone singers. The high Eb lays near the *secondo passaggio*, another awkward transition for most beginning baritones, and occurs on beat one in 4/4 time which begins the musical phrase. The singer’s tendency will be to attack the note because it is high pitched and on a strong beat with no prior vocal line preparing the air flow, creating a pushed and unhealthy tone. Foster’s word choice will assist on this note’s success. The word “Hard” begins with a [h] which allows the breath to start evenly and detracts from harsh glottal onsets. The [a] is a very similar mouth position to [o], which would be optimal for matching the baritone’s natural formant. One must make sure that the “r” does not color the vowel choice. When working with a student, it is important to emphasize attention to breath support at the beginning of the phrase, to aid in the tendency to press into the high note, and the tall [a] vowel space, modified slightly towards [o] if necessary.
Vocal Lines and Breath Management

“Hard Times Come Again No More” has much melodic appeal. The melodic lines wave gently, imitating an almost speech-like inflection. This song is broken into standard four bar phrases, and optimally, each phrase would be sung in one breath. However, due to the moderate tempo, these phrases can feel slightly lengthy for a beginning baritone. Each line possesses an option for a breath, if needed by the singer. If breath management is an issue for this singer, suggest a breath after the first cadence. This will allow the singer to focus on the performance nuances rather than on the challenge of sustaining the phrase.

The song contains a few instances of repeated notes within a line, at mm. 5, 9, 17. Singers often have a tendency to lean into each of these notes, sacrificing line and continuity of breath flow. Singing the passage on a single vowel will often help to smooth out the line with an even tone. There are no large dynamic or tempo shifts and no dramatic swings of mood, rather, the poignancy of this piece is derived from its simple and relatable text that should be delivered with nuance and subtlety.

Communication and Performance

As is the case with many of Foster’s pieces, “Hard Times Come Again No More” is in verse/chorus form. This presents difficulties for the beginning performer in how to interpret the piece so that it doesn’t become pedantic. Each of the four verses must be varied as to not become wearisome for the audience. It is suggested that the instructor read through the text with the student before learning the music. This is a valuable step to the process that is often overlooked students when they are initially learning a new
piece. A composer’s conception of a song almost always springs from an interest in the
text, and a historicity regarding the inception of the text. Make certain that the student
displays some understanding of the poetry and empathizes with its subject.

Training

Once the student has learned the notes and rhythms on their own, technical vocal
training can begin. This piece lends itself well to training breath management for the
following reasons:

- vocal lines are fluid and conjunct and can aid in maintaining legato
- repeated melodic figures help reinforce the creation of new habits
- the range stays within a comfortable area of most voices

With the understanding that each student will have varying levels of coordination and
competence in the area of breath management, the following includes suggestions on how
this piece can be used within a lesson to help breath management.

During the technical portion of the lesson it is important to work consistently on
breathing exercises. Emphasize the importance of *appoggio*, and verify that the proper
sensations are felt and understood. In *The Structure of Singing*, Richard Miller describes
*appoggio* practically.

In *appoggio* technique, the sternum must initially find a moderately high
position; this position is then retained throughout the inspiration-
expiration cycle. Shoulders are relaxed, but the sternum never slumps.
Because the ribs are attached to the sternum, sternal posture in part
determines diaphragmatic position. If the sternum lowers, the ribs cannot
maintain an expanded position, and the diaphragm must ascend more
rapidly. Both the epigastric and umbilical regions should be stabilized so
that a feeling of internal-external muscular balance is present. This
sensation directly influences the diaphragm.
Exercises designed to help understand the sensation of *appoggio*

1. Have the student inhale for five beats, noting that the posture is aligned and sternum is raised. During inhalation the student should feel a complete but unforced expansion of the ribcage. The breath should be suspended without closing either the glottis or the mouth, for five beats. Finally, have the student exhale silently while maintaining, as long as possible, the posture of the sternum and expansion of the ribcage. This exercise should then be repeated with incremental numbers of beats for each of the three steps.

Fig. 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inhale</th>
<th>Suspend</th>
<th>Exhale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Repeat the exhalation portion of the previous exercise using [s] or [f]. Follow that with the use of a voiced consonant or vowel on a comfortable pitch.

3. [fff] [fff] [fff] [fff] [fff] [fff]

The phonemes in this exercise should be done in rapid succession with a small impulse of the abdomen, emphasizing that the ribcage should not be drawn in during any of these short bursts.

After working on creating a sensation of *appoggio*, incorporate how to use breath when singing a musical phrase. Most of the vocalises function as breath-management exercises, which help to enforce the technique of support and *appoggio*. It is very easy for a student to get distracted by creating a presentable sound and forget the aim of the lesson. The following breathing exercises are suggested to facilitate breath management,
and are chosen to aid with how respiration will be used in “Hard Times Come Again No More.”

Fig. 4.2

A few other exercises may be necessary as well to fully prepare the student singing “Hard Times Come Again No More.” As mentioned in discussing range and registration, a few notes may sit out of the comfortable range of the beginning baritone. Janice Chapman, author of *Singing and Teaching Singing*, discusses a balance of efforts, decreasing the effort of the larynx and increasing the effort of the abdominal and thoracic cavities, as recommended in the following exercise.

Fig. 4.3

- Using an easy vowel, sing an ascending and descending arpeggio to the 10th.
- After the arpeggio has been practiced, elongate the top note while not changing the effort level of that note.
- Sing the exercise on each of the five cardinal Italian vowels [i, e, a, o, u].

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This exercise naturally allows a singer to approach their higher register in a light and relaxed manner while also increasing support effort from the abdominal region. Chapman states “The top notes may feel ridiculously easy and light to the singer, but usually contain all the power necessary to sing them well. If more power is needed it may be added from the support muscles rather than at the level of the vocal folds themselves.”55

On the topic of Unifying Male Registers, Richard Miller recommends starting in the head voice and descending in pitch. There is no sudden muscle shift going from Cricothyroid Dominant Production (CDP, or heavy mechanism/chest voice) into Thyroarytenoid Dominant Production (TDP, or light mechanism/head voice) in a descending pattern; though there often is a large audible break or “gear change” when ascending.56 This muscle shift occurs when the singer sings the Eb4 in “Hard Times Come Again No More,” however descending line allows the shift to be from CDP to TDP, as long as the singer is prepared to sing the Eb4 in head voice and not a pushed up chest voice. The following exercise will train the muscle coordination to help assist an onset in head voice while descending into chest voice.

Fig. 4.4

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With these exercises, the voice should be prepared to address the pedagogical issues of “Hard Times Come Again No More.” It is assumed that by this point the student has prepared the song so that pitches and rhythms are correct and lyrics are easily facilitated. Begin by reminding him of the pedagogical goals for this piece:

1. Breath management - Keep the *legato* line through the entire piece, create consistent and supported flow of air on every note.

2. Reduced Laryngeal Effort – Aim to remove all tension in the larynx on all pitches and be especially aware of those in the higher register.

Have the singer perform the piece noting any areas that may need to be addressed. If there is an issue of breath management, it may be helpful to have the singer vocalize the song on a single vowel or on the written vowels without any consonants. This makes it much easier to assess breaks in the line. It also becomes much more apparent to the singer, he may correct himself.

Speaking the text in a declamatory manner often allows students to become more acquainted with the natural cadence of the language. This can often reduce the amount of pressure that is placed on the vocal folds when speaking and singing are done in succession. If the singer is carrying too much weight into the higher register, remind them of the sensations of head voice achieved in prior exercises. If the Eb4 is strained the author has found it helpful to have them sing the passage on an “ng” while making small circles with their nose. This often releases the neck muscles and allows the TDP to prevail. Slowly add the vowels and then the consonants, being careful not to disturb sensations and timbre in correct vowel and consonant formation.
Interpretation of “Hard Times Come Again No More” holds difficulties of its own. It is often best to have the singer interpret the text and musical lines themselves. This connects the singer to the text and creates a more authentic performance. If the singer does not yet feel comfortable or is finding difficulty with interpretation it is the job of the teacher to guide the process. Asking the student simple and probing questions often helps them to start the process (ex. What does this specific text mean? What is the mood of the song? Why do you say the word “Oh”? What is the purpose of the rhythm in the accompaniment?, etc). Make sure that the student understands the tools available to them for musical interpretation; dynamics, prosody, onomatopoeia, accents, tone color, rhythm, etc.

A few suggestions on interpreting “Hard Times Come Again No More:”

1. Using the text to derive an overlying mood for each verse helps to distinguish differences between verses. V1 - Hopeful, V2 – Weary, V3 – Sympathetic, V4 – Communion

2. Using the idea of onomatopoeia or word painting can help to convey the meanings of important words through stresses of the important vowel or consonant sounds. For example the [h] of the word “Hard” can be enunciated to replicate a wearisome sigh lending more meaning to the word. If a small amount of time is taken on the “-ered” portion of the word “lingered” it can bring a more visceral meaning to the text.
“Gentle Lena Clare” was published in 1862, only two years prior to Stephen Foster’s death while he was living in New York. His wife and daughter had left to live in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, and Foster would live out the remainder of his life alone. The country was in turmoil due to the civil war raging around them and Stephen found it hard to stay in good spirits. As a reaction to the events around him, many of the songs Stephen published in the years of 1861 – 1863 dealt directly with the war and the poor state of the country, i.e. “Farewell Mother Dear,” “I’ll Be a Soldier,” “Lizzie Dies Tonight,” “Why Have My Loved Ones Gone,” “That’s What’s the Matter,” “Was My Brother in Battle,” etc.57 “Gentle Lena Clare,” however, does not fall into this category. Rather, it separates itself from much of Foster’s late song output because of its simple, adoring text. While the first two verses speak admiringly of Lena Clare, the third includes themes of war and speaks of reuniting when summer comes. This is a common thread, a soldier’s hopeful thought of returning to their loved ones when war is over.

### Musical Features Chart

| Melody | Lies in a low speaking range with an occasional leap into the upper registers, most of the lines move in stepwise motion |

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Harmony

The verse consists only of I, IV, and V chords, the chorus contains a secondary dominant resolving to the vi

Rhythm

Almost entirely a consistent eighth-note pulse, often pick-up notes to the down beat of the next measure are sixteenth notes

Form

Verse/chorus form, eight-measure verse and eight-measure chorus, three verses

Accompaniment

Simple chordal structures, harmonically supportive but not melodically. Contains an introduction, interludes between verses, and postlude

Text

A simple love text, an adoration of Lena Clare, with sentiments of separation and longing

Key

C-Major

Range

C3 to E4

Pedagogical Analysis

Range and Registration

This song remains in a comfortable range for most singers, although the singer must have access to an E4. The majority of the song remains in a lower tessitura with occasional intervallic leaps to E4. The opening line in the chorus is the only portion of the song that remains at a higher range for a consistent period of time; in this case it is a measure. This song is recommended for baritone or lower voiced tenor. It is possible
that lower voiced males could manage the high E4 that occasionally occurs; however, the pedagogical focus of this song is not to extend range so it would be preferable that the E4 be a pitch that is easily accessible.

Vocal Lines and Breath Management

The vocal lines in this song are short and *legato* with plenty of opportunities for an extra breath. Conserving air is not a great concern, moreover, this does not mean to imply that proper breath support techniques should not be developed in this song. Emphasis must still remain on making sure that the singer is maintaining a consistent flow of air, with a vowel-to-vowel *legato* connection throughout. If consistent support is created, the singer should feel relatively at ease.

Communication and Performance

“Gentle Lena Clare” is a song of adoration in three verses. The first verse praises Lena Clare’s beauty, the second her manner, the third verse tells us that she lives in a “shady glen,” a place where the singer longs to be with her. Pining for one’s love was a popular theme in Foster’s poetry and is often found in his sentimental songs. As mentioned in the introduction, it is possible that the poetry is intended from the perspective of a young soldier (as it was published during the civil war) awaiting a joyous homecoming. Imagining the importance of hope in war can lend a more desperate and meaningful nature to this song.
Training

“Gentle Lena Clare” is a simple song with regards to vocal technique. This allows the teacher to focus on other aspects of vocal production. Since the song remains mostly in a lower register, emphasis can be placed on phonatory aspects of singing. The following goals will be the focus of the work:

1. Create a relaxed, yet energized phonation throughout the duration of the song.
2. Execute balanced onsets and releases.

Maintaining a relaxed phonation occurs greatly at the level of breath support. If a consistent flow of air is not maintained at the varying coordinated pressure levels then it will be nearly impossible for a singer to achieve easy phonation. Barbara Doscher mentions this in *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*: “(Breath Support)’s objective is the proper coordination of expiration and phonation to provide an unwavering sound, an ample supply of breath, and relief from any unnecessary and obstructive tensions in the throat.”58 It is recommended that a teacher first review the principals of breath support with their students before continuing on to the exercises, which are designed to improve the relaxation of the throat musculature. Also, if at any point excessive tension in the throat is noticed in the following exercises, it may be due to faulty support. The exercises from the prior chapter may prove useful.

A lesson on proper onset will assist when approaching the topic of relaxing vocal fold adduction, or the closure of the vocal folds. Three types of onsets are commonly discussed in modern pedagogical texts. These include the aspirate onset, the glottal onset, and the balanced onset. In an aspirate onset the exhalation begins followed by the glottis

closing. This is recognizable due to the audible exhalation of air before pitch is created, which may sound like an [h] in front of the sung sound. In a glottal onset, adduction of the vocal folds occurs prior to the exhalation. This often creates a “grunting” sound (also known as a glottal stroke) before the sung sound occurs. This glottal stroke is the sound of the vocal folds springing open after a build-up of subgottal air pressure forces them into vibration. The severity of the glottal stroke changes with the level of adduction of the vocal folds. Scott McCoy mentions, “the quality of sustained phonation is strongly influenced by the method of onset; aspirate onset almost always leads to aspirate phonation, while glottal onset might induce a pressed sound,” or sound that has excess vocal fold adduction creating a strident tone. The balanced onset occurs when adduction and airflow occur simultaneously, making a clear and easy phonation without the presence of a glottal stroke. Creating a balanced onset in the singer’s technique will be key to maintaining a freely produced sound with little to no tension created in the vocal fold adduction.  

Practice creating a balanced onset in a comfortable register to manage the coordination in timing between glottis closure and initiation of airflow. Once the timing has been achieved, move the voice through its register. A good beginning exercise comes from *The Art of Singing* by William Shakespeare, This exercise will allow for slow and slight adjustments while focusing primarily on maintaining a consistent onset.

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Fig. 5.1
This exercise allows ample opportunity to practice consistent onsets on various notes. It should be sung on an [α] vowel.

Shakespeare provides this rule:

Rule X – Let the student start the vowel exactly on the pitch and endeavor to surpass his previous efforts toward singing with looseness in the throat, tongue and jaw. As the throat is now wide open, the act of stopping these detached notes will compel him to control his breath rightly.60

Once this exercise has led to fairly consistent onsets the student should attempt the same coordinated onset on different vowel sounds. The next series of exercises comes from The Structure of Singing, by Richard Miller.

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When changing vowel sounds for these exercises, it is often helpful to begin with the more forward vowels such as [i], [e], and [E]. Once coordination is achieved on these vowel sounds move to the back vowels of [ɔ], [o], [ʊ], and [u].

In Gentle Lena Claire many phrases begin with the word “I,” while each of these onsets start on a relatively lower note in the singers range. While singing the second verse of the song, in which the first three phrases start on vowel sounds, have the singer concentrate on the onset of subsequent phrases. Try to create the same coordination in “Gentle Lena Clare” that was achieved in the exercises.

A subject aligned with onsets is that of releases. Like onsets, releases often come in three varieties as well: the soft release, the hard release, and the balanced release. The soft release occurs when breath pressure decays prematurely, the result being a breathy and lackluster sound when approaching the release. The hard release occurs

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when the release is met with a sudden increase of glottal pressure causing a “grunt-like”
and abrupt stop to the sound. The balanced release occurs when the air flow stops
without waning and the glottis remains at a consistent pressure. The resulting effect is a
phrase termination that contains a timbre consistent with the rest of the phrase.  

A balanced release is often more easily achieved than the balanced onset.
Coordination of this technique only requires directed concentration. The student must
consciously sing to the end of their phrases, while maintaining breath support and release
without increasing vocal effort. If the singer has a tendency to release incorrectly, a
correction can be achieved using the phrases within the song. If the singer has a tendency
towards hard releases, the first phrase of “Gentle Lena Clare” will prove to be an efficient
practice phrase. As the phrase ends on a higher pitch, one may feel the need to pinch off
the sound with the glottis in order to make the release. The following process should
help to create a balanced release.

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1. A balanced release can be felt by the student if they repeat “HA-HA-HA-HA-HA” in a slow and deliberate laughing style, making sure the student feels the release at the end of each syllable.  

2. Once the balanced onset is felt, sing the song phrase in a lower key so that there isn’t any difficulty in range. The singer must maintain a constant stream of air throughout the phrase and release the last word, “Clare,” with the same release felt in the “HA-HA-HA” exercise.

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3. Bring the exercise back to its original key and practice with the same supported air flow and the same release. The “r” in “Clare” may add to creating glottal closure. If this is the case, remove the “r” from the word, singing only [klɛ].

If the singer has a tendency towards a soft onset, use the second phrase of the song and proceed in the following manner. This phrase ends in a stepwise descending line, with the release in a comfortable range. If the singer has a tendency towards soft release this phrase will create such an occurrence.

Fig. 5.6

1. Sing the entirety of the phrase on [ð] (as in “thine” or “thus”), the valve created by this consonant sound will bottleneck the airflow. A certain amount of air pressure is needed to maintain a consistent sound.

2. Switch to a vowel sound while maintaining the consistency in the air speed, making sure that the sound energy is maintained through to the release.

3. Once the air speed is maintained through the release with consistency put the text back in place. As in the last exercise, this phrase also ends with a retroflex “ɹ” sound, [ɻ], on the name “Clare.” Make sure the singer does not close to the consonant sound too early as this may exacerbate the problem of a soft release.
If the *soft release* still occurs after this series of exercises, attempt changing the final word from “hair” to “head” and asking the singer to sustain their singing energy into the voiced [d]. This harder consonant sound will help to create a more abrupt feeling to the end of the line, and it will be more difficult for the singer to drop energy in the vocal line preceding. Once the desired effect is achieved, return to the original text and match the sensations.

Once a proficient level of coordination is achieved in onsets and releases, move on to training the relaxation of the larynx. Beginning singers often have trouble finding the coordination of vocal fold closure. The primary action of the larynx that needs to be relaxed during phonation is that of vocal fold adduction. If the vocal folds are not fully approximated, the phonation will often be breathy and lack volume or energy (a hypoactive function of the vocal fold adductors). If the vocal fold closure becomes pressured, air flow is hindered and the phonation will be pressed and inconsistent.

Another possible cause of extraneous tension in the larynx may come from depressing or raising the larynx. The latter of these problems will be addressed first. Suspending the larynx in its proper position requires the cooperation of many muscle groups. Many muscles can be responsible for lowering and raising the larynx as well, but it is quite often tension in the mandible and tongue root that create a pressed phonation.\(^65\) Excessive tension in the tongue and the jaw causes elevation in the larynx by means of the hyoglossus, geniohyoid, and mylohyoid muscles.\(^66\)

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Laryngeal position is often easily maintained by drawing parallels to speech habits. Have the student speak a few lines of text while being aware of their laryngeal involvement. Once the desired effect has been felt add the rhythm to the text as it pertains to the song. Make sure there is a constant flow of breath pressure and no decay to the phrase or individual words.

Once the student is able to maintain a sustained line of text without manipulation of the larynx, add pitch. Note that pitch change should be driven by air pressure and not through the manipulation of the larynx.
“Katy Bell” is one of Foster’s more overlooked songs, never having achieved a broad popularity in Foster’s time and has been mostly forgotten in the years after his death. It is assumed that it was dedicated to Kate Newton, a famous actress of the day and the star of many plays, including *Much Ado about Nothing* and *A Terrible Secret*.67 This song was published in 1863 during one of Foster’s most productive years, also marking the beginning of his collaboration with the young poet, George Cooper. In 1863, while living meagerly in New York, eighteen of the twenty-three Foster/Cooper songs were published. John Tasker Howard, in his book, *Stephen Foster: America’s Troubadour*, tells a story of how Cooper recalled a time when they sold the rights to “Willie Has Gone to the War” after writing it one morning in 1863:

It was a cold, raw, winter day, snow was falling drearily, and the pavements covered with slush. Stephen’s shoes had holes in them and he had no overcoat, but he seemed oblivious to discomfort and misery. As the author and composer proceeded up Broadway, they passed Wood’s Music Hall, and the proprietor, standing in the lobby, hailed them as they passed with a question, “What have you got there, Steve?” The song was sold then and there, Wood paying ten dollars cash, fifteen more to be paid at the box office that evening.68

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Twenty-five dollars is a measly sum for a composer whose second published song, “Oh Susanna,” earned over $10,000.69 “Katy Bell” most likely met a very similar fate as “Willie has Gone to the War,” as none of the songs on which Cooper and Foster collaborated that achieved much recognition, with the possible exception of more comic songs, such as, “If You’ve Only Got a Moustache,” “There are Plenty of Fish in the Sea,” and “My Wife is a Most Knowing Woman.”

Although the song never received critical praise in its time, Foster biographer H.V. Milligan gives praise in his book published in 1920. Milligan praises “Katy Bell” for its “inspiration” and “innocence.” He regards it above “Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair” and other parlor songs of that vein. Milligan’s main objective, however, was to label Foster as “America’s Folk-song Composer,” and his musical interests and opinions were not always shared.70

**Musical Features Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melody</td>
<td>Mostly consists of a jumping third or fourth pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Very Simple, occasionally tonicizes the dominant and the mediant, but uses simple chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>Almost entirely straight eighth-notes throughout, some syncopation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Strophic in 3 verses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accompaniment</th>
<th>Harmonically supportive, provides no melodic doubling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Simple love story, themes of youthful excitement about love and adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>C-major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>C3-F4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pedagogical Analysis**

**Range and Registration**

The range of “Katy Bell” is large, extending to nearly an octave and a half. The singer must be able to sustain an easy C3, while still being able to briefly ascend up to F4. This song could be easily sung by a young tenor; however, it will be most pedagogically beneficial to a young baritone, for stabilizing both the zona di passaggio and extending range. The entire range is spanned twice in each verse, through vocal lines comprised of an ascending pattern of descending thirds and ascending fourths. This is used frequently by many vocal pedagogues for range unification and making quick adjustments during pitch change. Exercises containing such a pattern can be found in *Bel Canto: A Theoretical and Practical Vocal Method* by Mathilde Marchesi, and *Practical Method of Italian Singing*, by Nicolai Vaccai.

“Katy Bell” is in verse/chorus form, consisting of three verses and a short two-bar chorus at the end of each verse. The melodic four-measure phrase in each verse is sung twice with different text. The ascending line to the F4 allows for a gradual change from chest voice to head voice due to the constantly shifting small jumps that pattern their way
through the *zona di passaggio*. The one-line chorus offers little difficulty for a singer, except for two notes that enter the middle register (“lives” on E4, “in” on D4). The notes are approached in a simple arcing pattern and are sung on an [I] vowel, which matches the vowel formant for this register and facilitates phonation through this passage. If necessary, the vowel may be slightly modified to allow for a more smooth transition from head voice into chest voice.

Vocal Lines and Breath Management

The phrasing in “Katy Bell” is clear and contains no large jumps or abrupt vocal movements that would cause the breath to falter. The main difficulties in this piece, concerning breath management, are determining where and when to breathe. Since this song is essentially a four-measure phrase repeated six times with a short tag sung three times, the phrasing should depend on the text, and therefore, differ from one another. If the singer displays proficiency supporting their breath through longer phrases, have them sing the entire four-measure phrase with one breath. This may be difficult for young singers but would be preferable to taking extraneous breaths within the phrase, as it would allow for a continuous stream of air to power the vocal line without breaking.

Maintaining proper support and consistent legato lines, while important to maintain for all songs, may need specific consideration while singing “Katy Bell.” The small jumps of the vocal line may cause the singer to pulse each note with their breath,

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sacrificing the *legato* line. The vocal line also extends one-and-a-half octaves in two measures. Ascending and descending this rapidly may require special attention, due to the necessary changes in breath pressure needed for higher and lower notes. Richard Miller cites difficulties of changing breath pressure on ascending and descending scales in *Solution for Singers*:

> With ascending pitch, gradual adjustment of the vocal folds for the elongation process, and the increase of vocal fold resistance to airflow, occur. In a descending scale, it is sometimes difficult to regulate reduced levels of breath energy to match vocal-fold shortening. Breath pressure then remains too high. The singer should learn to gradually relax the energy rate. (A just as frequently encountered matter concerns reducing breath energy too quickly.)

Communication and Performance

If the singer does not vary their interpretation of the music line, the repeated figure in this piece becomes monotonous over time. This holds a specific challenge in “Katy Bell,” as the singer repeats the same melodic gesture six times. Ideas on how to vary these repetitions will be addressed in the subsequent training portion of this chapter.

**Training**

The primary pedagogical objective in this piece is to help accommodate a blended registration. The achievement of a unified register is important to attaining a well-produced classical sound. Making sure this is achieved will require the coordination of multiple systems. While the register shift is occurring, breath pressure must adjust to the changing of the laryngeal mechanics, also, the resonating chamber must tune to the

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proper formant. A secondary objective will be to aid the singer in achieving a varied performance through differences in phrasing.

Dividing our primary objective into its multiple techniques will aid in the achievement of the overall goal.

1. Help the singer to experience the sensation of register shifting.
2. Teach the singer to change breath pressure to keep a consistently produced tone
3. As the singer moves into the higher registers, introduce vowel modification to help the sound achieve a more full and natural resonance.

William Vennard addresses the need for these systems to coordinate in Singing: The Mechanism and the Technic:

Three generalizations may be offered, one as to pitch, one as to intensity, and a third as to quality. First, to develop the widest possible range without a break, the adjustment must be heavy in the lower part of the voice, and the balance should shift smoothly toward the lighter production as the scale is ascended. Second, on any given pitch, the softer it is, the lighter must be the production without breathiness; and the louder, the heavier. Third, to produce “rich” timbre the adjustment should be heavy; to produce “sweet” timbre, it should be light. We have seen that the differences in timbre are differences in degrees of regularity and irregularity in the pattern of each vibration.74

Students will differ in their natural abilities to easily “flip” into their higher registers. In this author’s experience, some young singers adjust automatically when they sense there is too much pressure on the voice, and others will continue to push through without making the proper adjustments. For the singer who naturally adjusts to the changes in register it is important to focus their attention on what is occurring so the

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process becomes conscious and practiced. For the singer who is not able to make the
transition, it is often helpful to sing ascending scales starting around C3 and up to F3
while emphasizing a sense of gradual lightening on each tone. Janice Chapman offers
another useful exercise in Singing and Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to
Classical Voice:

Chest to head: Using a rolled “r” scale through the upper register transition
assist the singer to trust the cricothyroid tilt to manage this area of the
voice. The singer’s jaw needs to be free of tension, not jutting forward
and not jamming open. I have found that when a singer’s support is fully
engaged and the jaw and tongue root are free, that this upper register tends
to “change itself.”

Once the singer achieves the transition, they should be reminded of the techniques
that were successful when studying breath support, as discussed in Chapter Four of this
essay. As the singer moves into a higher and lighter range, support must increase to
retain a sense of power in the tone. Exercise 5 in Chapter Four is specifically conducive
for this type of training.

The final topic for conversation is how to modify vowel sounds when the voice
reaches the zona di passaggio, which will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Nine of
this essay. For the purposes of this song vowel modification will only be addressed as it
pertains to the text during the song discussion.

The main melodic figure in “Katy Bell,” is an ascending pattern of downward
thirds followed by ascending fourths and later a descending pattern in a similar manner
(Fig. 6.1.) This same pattern can also be found in Mathilde Marchesi’s vocal method
book, Bel Canto: A Theoretical and Practical Vocal Method, Ex. 1. (Fig.6.2)

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75 William Vennard, Singing: the Mechanism and the Technic, Revised ed. (New York: Carl
Fischer, 1967), 77.
Marchesi’s exercise contains the same descending third/ascending fourth motive that ascends octave and then back down. The descending is a pattern of descending thirds and ascending seconds. Marchesi states that this exercise is “useful for blending the registers, increasing flexibility, and for accuracy in intonation.” Nicolo Vaccai also employs the

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motivic idea of sequencing third skips in his “Lesson I – Salti di Terza” from Practical Method of Italian Singing. This exercise keeps the voice in a more moderate range than Marchesi’s, but the muscle coordination required is the same. It is important to retain the sensation of lightening the voice and maintaining support through these exercises.

The design of Foster’s melody in “Katy Bell” clearly parallels exercises that assist with register unification. Both exercises contain the same melodic figure, however, since Vaccai’s includes lyrics it creates a greater parallel to the song. Consonants sounds often exist as obstructions of the flow of air, originating in the facial, oral, and laryngeal areas. Keeping the consonant sounds quick and freely produced can rectify problems that arise from text. This ensures that the breath flow and tone are not obstructed, ensuring the singer will achieve more legato line that will transmit techniques achieved in Marchesi’s or Vaccai’s exercises. After the singer has mastered the Marchesi and Vaccai exercises, transitioning into “Katy Bell” should be rather simple.

A look at the lyrics for “Katy Bell” will aid the discussion of where to incorporate modified vowels. The repeated melodic figures yield two or three notes that should be modified slightly. In the verse below vowels in the zona di passaggio are in bold print.

Going down the shady dell

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Where the Honeysuckles grow,

I met lovely Katy Bell

With her dimpled cheeks a glow

Oh the beauties of her face,

As she flitted by apace,

With a step of fairy grace,

My poor words can never tell.

Katy Bell lives in the dell,

How I love her none can tell.82

Scott McCoy, in *Your Voice: An Inside View*, presents a vowel circle diagram which aids in modification of vowels for *passaggio* singing (as seen in Fig. 6.3). McCoy states:

“Register shifts can often be ‘ironed-out’ simply by modifying toward vowels whose first formants are found at pitches within the area of transition. Figure 4.16 (Fig. 6.3) presents the vowel series from closed/forward to open to closed/back. Vowels can often be shifted one or two positions more closed or open without significantly impacting intelligibility.”83

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Modifying the vowels that move into the *passaggio* in “Katy Bell” can be modified in this manner if the singer is having trouble creating clean and easily-produced sounds.

This charming love story is easily relatable to all ages. Young men singing this song should not find it difficult to interpret the text. One possible interpretation follows; Each verse has its own unique character and should be treated differently. The first verse is narrative and should contain an air of declamation. The dynamic level should be *mezzo-forte* and the rhythms should retain a steady walking beat with slight emphasis on the downbeats of measures 5-7 and 9-11. In the second verse, the singer idolizes Katy Bell and her beauty, and an air of reverie should pervade this verse. The dynamic level should drop, and the line should be sung with seamless *legato*. In the final verse, the singer waits for Katy Bell to return to the spot where they first met, falling in love when she returns. This verse should begin softly and plaintively as the singer waits. The second line has a distinct mood change, for which one should begin at the same dynamic and crescendo through to “bride” with an energized and excited tone. Following each verse, the chorus should always take on the affect of the previously sung verse.
CHAPTER 7

Linger in Blissful Repose

“Linger in Blissful Repose” was published in 1858, at the beginning of one of Foster’s largest output of sentimental songs. The vocal lines in this piece contain ascending and descending scale patterns that can assist several technical issues: train coordination in breath flow and breath pressure, to extend range, unify registers, and release laryngeal tension throughout the voice.

Musical Features Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Mostly scale-like patterns ascending and descending, occasional chromatic movement, very few leaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Often tonicizes the second scale degree, the stepwise shifting of the melody makes the harmony favor the supertonic chord, simple harmonic structure throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>The entire song follows the same rhythmic pattern, quarter-note and two eighth-note triplets, with the exception of a two lines at the end of the piece, there is no juxtaposition between eighth-note triplets and straight eighth-notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Form | Strophic, contains two strophes  
---|---  
Accompaniment | Quarter-note chords support the melody harmonically and keep a steady beat throughout, but offer no melodic doubling or appeal  
Text | The text is a lullaby, the singer is lulling someone to sleep, text is pastoral and calming  
Key | Bb-major, briefly tonicizes C-minor  
Range | Eb3 – F4, one octave  

**Pedagogical Analysis**

**Range and Registration**

Because of the range, this song may remain too high for some lower voiced males. An ascending scale reaches the highest point of this piece, an F4; baritones with a more solid grasp of their high notes may benefit greatly from the employment of this song. However, based on tessitura and range, this song would be most effective for young tenors.

The vocal lines in “Linger in Blissful Repose” are written as ascending and descending scale patterns. Moving in step-wise motion, each line spans between an interval of a sixth, and an octave. Patterns such as these are integral to training the voice in many aspects of singing, such as agility, continuity, breath management, muscle coordination, register unification, range extension, and timbre development. The voice gradually moves through register changes and singers can make adjustments in the same gradual and organic manner. In this author’s experience, disjointed vocal lines force a
singer to break their airflow and disconnect from many of the adjustments that need to occur when changing pitch/volume/word sounds.

Register unification can be specifically targeted using this piece. The singer may notice a shifting from heavy mechanism to light mechanism as he reaches the peak of the ascending lines. A seamless transition between registers is attained by a steady coordination of the muscle groups. Descending from lighter mechanism into heavy mechanism is often easier for young males, because the coordination is more natural.84 Foster has incorporated a number of descending lines into the song as well. Using these to the advantage of the singer’s coordination will be addressed in the training portion.

The singer must be comfortable sustaining a D4, a note that lies in the primo passaggio for many young tenors, as many lines begin or end on this pitch. For the ascending lines, a stepwise approach to the D4 will often encourage a tenor to continue to push the heavy mechanism into this note, creating a possibly strident or belted sound. If the singer has not yet found the coordination in mixed voice to match the timbre of the chest voice, the note may sound out of place with the rest of the line. The highest note in the piece is an F4, approached by an ascending minor third. It is sung on a closed [i] vowel, which assists the singer in flipping into a natural use of lighter mechanism.85


Vocal Lines and Breath Management

“Linger in Blissful Repose” consists of multiple two-measure phrases. Each phrase has either a quarter or eighth rest after the phrase, allowing the singer ample time to inhale properly before beginning the next phrase. These phrases make the song physically easier to sing, but do little to help a singer learn to manage breath support through a longer passage. If the student is having trouble maintaining support, this piece will be a performable option for them; however, it will not help to improve their technical abilities in this regard.

The pedagogical strengths of this piece are in register unification; however, learning to ascend through register shifts relies on coordination of breath pressure changes. Janice Chapman in *Singing and Teaching Singing: A Holistic View*, states that one of the most important factors in successful register transitions is breath support, “excellent abdominal support with good airflow, (allowing the fine discrete maneuvers within the larynx to take place free of unnecessary tension.)”86 Exercises for coordinating air flow within register transitions will be examined in the training section.

Communication and Performance

“Linger in Blissful Repose” contains one of Foster’s more poetic lyrics. This song is a lullaby, the singer calms a sleeping child or maiden telling them to listen and let all of their cares fly away. The sentiment of the poetry is one that is easily grasped by most young singers. The text itself has a few words that are rarely used in modern

vocabulary, so it may be necessary to read through the text with the student to ensure they have a complete understanding of the poetry.

The dynamic levels should remain between *mezzo-piano* and *pianissimo* throughout, allowing for the calming lullaby must be sung gently and carefully. With a lower dynamic level, some of the higher notes may be difficult to sing. Success will rely on two aspects of singing; breath support and vowel modification. Janice Chapman states:

> Young singers often feel nervous about the demands of singing softly. I have found that once a singer’s support is active…and their voice is well-schooled in focusing the tone, soft singing is easier to manage…When singing softly above the passaggio, it is helpful for a singer to first sing loudly to locate the area where they experience the focus of each note, then place the soft version of that pitch and vowel similarity.87

She also states:

> Another important issue around “soft singing” is the size of the vowels. If the vowels become mean and restricted, the pitching and tonal quality will automatically be affected.88

**Training**

Training for “Linger in Blissful Repose” should begin with defining the pedagogical concerns of the song and addressing each individually. The pedagogical concerns that were raised in the analysis portion were:

1. Coordinating register shifts on ascending and descending scales.

2. Maintaining support through the *passaggio*.

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3. Supporting a soft dynamic level.

All three of these concerns stem from a similar root. The singer must learn how to coordinate the necessary changes in breath pressure with laryngeal shifts required to change pitch and dynamic. The goal is to find beauty of tone, and balanced tone during pitch and dynamic shifts.

Learning to coordinate breath pressure with pitch change and intensity is often a difficult task, often requiring experimentation by the singer. In *Your Voice: An Inside View*, Scott McCoy charts the actions required for pitch change and volume control, seen in Fig. 7.1.

Fig. 7.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Muscles</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pitch lowering</td>
<td>Thyroarytenoid</td>
<td>Muscle contracts to shorten and thicken vocal folds, reducing their tension while increasing mass per unit length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch raising</td>
<td>Cricothyroid (primary); thyroarytenoid and inferior constrictor (secondary); expiratory muscles</td>
<td>Vocal folds are made longer, thinner and stiffer, requiring increased subglottal breath pressure to sustain vibration, TA works antagonistically with CT to maintain amplitude control with changing pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity control</td>
<td>Expiratory muscles; adductor muscles (LCA and IA); thyroarytenoid</td>
<td>Pulmonary system increases subglottal air pressure while adductors tighten to increase glottal resistance and TA contracts to enlarge vibrating margin of vocal folds, increasing the mass per unit length</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important aspect in this chart is the necessity for increased subglottal air pressure in both raising pitch and increasing volume. Changes in subglottal air pressure are achieved by coordinating the antagonism of the muscles for inhalation and exhalation.

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The breath support exercises covered in the Training portion of “Hard Times Come Again No More,” are a good place to begin to secure breath support that is well achieved and understood. The issues addressed below concern breath-pacing. When singers have trouble achieving louder or higher singing, teachers frequently request “more support.”

Richard Miller warns against this in the *Structure of Singing*:

Unless the singer, either student or professional, understands the delicate physical balances appropriate to the shifting demands of breath management, to call for “more support” only complicates the task of balancing subglottic pressure, airflow rate, and vocal-fold approximation. In fact, it may well be that too much muscle activity is present in the torso; requesting “more support” may only exacerbate problems of dynamic muscle equilibrium.90

The following exercises place emphasis on the correct elements of breath activity.

Fig. 7.2

As the voice ascends through this exercise, ensure that the student feels an increase of breath pressure. Often students will wait too long to increase breath pressure and on the last few notes a sudden push of air will send the voice into a breathy or strident tone. Instead, a gradual increase of breath pressure should be felt as the scale ascends. Thinking of focusing or aiming the tone can assist in creating the desired effect. Requesting a spinning tone may help to generate a feeling of increased breath pressure from the student.

In Sieber’s *36 Eight-Measure Vocalises for Tenor*, this exercise can assist a young tenor to learn to coordinate breath pressure change with ascending pitch.

Fig. 7.3

In above exercise, a *crescendo* follows the ascending line, helping to reinforce a natural increase of breath pressure. The syncopated rhythm also helps to drive the energy into the sound. The held half-notes in measures two and six should be carried over into the next line.\(^91\) This technique of maintaining consistency of air flow in high-notes of long duration will be advantageous when singing “Linger in Blissful Repose,” as many of the vocal phrases in Foster’s song end D4 or E4 and are sustained for more than a beat.

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Singing softly, in a consistent and beautiful manner, is one of the more difficult tasks in basic vocal technique. Beginning singers will often find it challenging to maintain the same frequency balance in soft singing that is achieved in loud singing. Softer dynamic levels are created when a smaller portion of the total vocal fold mass is brought together, lessening the resistance of closed glottis. Young singers often have difficulties coordinating airflow with this new resistance level, relying instead on a breath admixture that creates a change in frequency levels, resulting in a breathy tone and a lack of support.92 Richard Miller warns about the trends of training volume control from soft onset:

Techniques built upon a soft onset have difficulty in eliminating an admixture of breath from the tone, unless subglottic pressure is suddenly increased at some point in the mounting dynamic level. In such techniques there is a tendency to revert to breath in the tone as a means of diminishing volume and projection.93

*Messa di voce* exercises offer a great deal of technical training in the area of volume control. It is important that the student execute these exercises while maintaining a uniform timbre.

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Fig. 7.4  

As singer begins each *messa di voce* with solid breath support and a clear tone, make sure the onset of sound is not breathy. The student should not add excessive airflow as they execute a decrescendo. Once the singer has successfully created a clear *messa di voce*, have them note the difference in the sensation of loud and soft. Extremes of volume should not be attempted on the first few run-throughs. As the dynamic coordination grows, the softs and louds will become more differentiated.

With these techniques secured, singing “Linger in Blissful Repose” should be easier for the student. The majority of the vocal lines in this piece are in an ascending scale pattern, and as the student sings these patterns on a single vowel it will help to coordinate the breath pressure changes needed with the ascending passage. Once the pitch change is coordinated with the breath, adding the text will be a simple transition if the singer does not alter the breath flow. The repeated rhythmic figure in this song is a quarter-note tied to a triplet eighth-note followed by two groups of eighth-note triplets on beats two and three of the measure, and ending with a half note on beat one of the next measure. Often a singer will put emphasis on the downbeat of beat three in the first measure of this motive. This is especially relevant on measures fifteen and twenty-three; the descending melodic figure repeats a note between the last eighth-note triplet of beat
two and the downbeat of beat three. The singer should strive to seamlessly connect these notes so that an emphasis is not created.

Singing this piece piano may become difficult especially in measures seventeen and nineteen. Here the melody has changed slightly; the vocal line begins on a higher note and descends through the passaggio. Young male singers will often approach these passages with too much weight in the voice. The result is usually an unpleasant tone, devoid of vibrato or color due to excess tension, or the voice will crack. The starting pitches in measures seventeen and nineteen should be sung softly. Reminders to use light mechanism or head voice may help to achieve the desired tone. Using a falsetto production on starting pitches may be a way for singers to find use of the light mechanism since Cricothyroid Dominant Production is employed in falsetto singing.95 Falsetto production is not recommended in performance, but only as a tool to help transition into effective lighter mechanism singing. A similar problem may occur in measures twenty-nine through thirty-two, the last four measures of this song. Here the voice ascends to an F4 and remains at the area of the primo passaggio for five beats. The use of a lighter mechanism in this passage is advocated to avoid carrying excess weight.

“Linger in Blissful Repose” offers many opportunities to hone the craft of legato singing, one of the most important elements for technique and interpretation. Sing through each line on a single vowel to ensure consistency of tone and evenness of breath. Create gentle lines devoid of hard edges or tones. The word “dreaming” is repeated in sequential manner in measures twenty-five and twenty-six. This word should be sung as

soft echoes of the prior phrase, making each repeat slightly softer, a slight stress on “Dream-” will help to deemphasize “-ing” and make the voice sound as if it is fading away.
CHAPTER 8
Open Thy Lattice, Love

“Open Thy Lattice, Love” was Foster’s first song to be published. George Willig of Philadelphia published the song with its dedication to Susan Petland, a neighbor of the Fosters who would later in life marry Stephen’s boyhood friend Andrew Robinson. This song, with text by George Morris, and his second, the popular *Oh, Susanna* (text by Stephen Foster), were both serenades, and innocent love songs (or at least love song parodies). Susan Petland, though significantly younger than Foster and company, probably made a perfect audience for the songs. It is unknown how much influence Foster’s composition teacher, Henry Kleber, had over the composition, however, it is speculated that Kleber had a significant hand in helping Foster arrange the accompaniment for publishing.

Musical Features Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Mostly stepwise motion with a few large leaps, very rhythmically driven</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Simple harmonic patterns, occasionally tonicizes the Dominant (passage that shifts between V7/V and V)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Rhythm | Dance rhythm throughout, syncopated eighth note pattern in 6/8 time, contains a four-bar rallentando
---|---
Form | Strophic, two strophes
Accompaniment | Harmonically supportive throughout, doubles the melody in places, usually just provides a chordal driving rhythm
Text | Romantic and dreamy, very playful and fun serenade from one young lover to another
Key | D Major
Range | D3 – F#4, octave and a third

**Pedagogical Analysis**

Range and Registration

“Open Thy Lattice, Love” is a charming melody with a slightly more extensive range than most of Foster’s songs. The lowest note is a D3 which exists only twice within each strophe. The rest of the piece remains a bit higher, winding its way often to D4 and E4, and occasionally reaching F#4, all of which should be sung with ease. This piece is therefore recommended for a young tenor.

One of the most striking aspects of the melodic contour is the large leaps that appear throughout the piece. In measure six - “listen to me” has a leap of a major-sixth, measure sixteen – “away and away” has a leap of an octave, measure eighteen – “Listen to me” has another leap of a major-sixth. The leaps of a major sixth both end on F#4, which for a tenor could be either in mixed voice or head voice. In either case, the decreased activity of the thyroarytenoids should be easily noticed as sensations of lighter
mechanical action. During these leaps it is imperative that one does not bring heavy mechanical action of chest voice into the higher notes.

The higher notes in this piece, the F#4’s, occur twice, are approached by leap, and go to a closed vowel (“me” [i] and “to” [u]). The approach of the leap can be difficult to coordinate at first, however, the inclusion of these closed vowels will facilitate the shift into head voice. Male singers will naturally close vowels to make the shift into head voice, a technique often referred to as “cover” or “vowel modification.” Scott McCoy, in *Your Voice: An Inside View*, states; “Closed vowels (e.g. /i/, /e/, or /u/) will generally shift to a head resonance without any conscious effort.” Making sure that one approaches each of these words with pure closed vowels will be key to the success of register transition.

Vocal Lines and Breath Management

“Open Thy Lattice, Love” is a short song, only fifteen measures of singing per strophe and only two strophes. Endurance is not a critical issue with this piece. Though brief, challenges may still exist. Fatigue and poor breath management can be easily hidden, leading to formation of bad breathing habits.

Two sections require specific vigilance. Measures eight through twelve reveal a gradually ascending line with a *rallentando* stretching for four measures. If the *rallentando* is strictly observed and a breath is not taken this line can be extremely

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difficult. Measure ten provides an opportunity for a quick breath after the word “blue.”

The breath must be anticipated so that the pick-up into the next line is not late. The rallentando should stretch time, but not so much that the overall lilting rhythm is lost. The pacing of this line is quite tricky and should be established through spoken practice before adding the challenges of the vocal line.

Another section requiring attention is measures fifteen and sixteen, “Away o’er the waters away and away” with a fermata on the word “and.” It is easy to fall into the trap of supporting the tone into and through the fermata and forgetting about the cadence at the conclusion of the line, resulting in the final “away” being sung on the end of the air supply in an unsupported manner.

One of the rhythmic motives used by Foster in this piece is a dotted-eighth/sixteenth/eighth-note pattern in which the sixteenth-note exists as either a neighbor tone or a passing tone. The transitory nature of these sixteenth notes will often interrupt the breath flow and legato of the line. These rhythmic motives appear throughout the song, and, in most occurrences, the word that falls on the sixteenth note is a vowel sound followed by a voiced consonant ([n] [m] [l] and [ʁ]). It is easy for the singer to close the vowel sound quickly and favor the voiced consonant, thereby detrimentally interrupting the flow of air and the quality of the vocal line.

Communication and Performance

George Morris’ text in “Open Thy Lattice, Love” is endearing and innocent. The youthful singer of the serenade sings outside a maiden’s window, calling for her to come out and be with him. In the first verse, the singer describes a beautiful evening, with
moon, stars, and breeze on the sea. This verse is a call to the sleeping girl, to wake her without disturbing anyone else. The dynamic level should quietly reflect this sentiment. The dynamic level in the more intimate second verse should be less than the first. The young lady has come to the window, presumably, and now he speaks to her of love. The task for the performer is to create an interpretation that reflects the innocence and naivety of young love.

“Open Thy Lattice, Love” has many interpretive markings. Foster rarely put these markings into his later scores, perhaps a telling feature that Henry Kleber, Foster’s teacher, had a hand in revising the score before it was sent off to the publisher. An allegretto is marked at the beginning of the piece. This tempo marking should be followed throughout the piece, unless otherwise specified by Foster (i.e. the large rallentando in measures nine through twelve). If the tempo is dragged or stretched, it loses the playful feel of the piece. The delicatamente marked in the piano part helps to evoke a hesitant nature of the event. A dynamic too loud would draw attention to the young man singing the serenade.

There are a few rhythmic and melodic gestures incorporated that may also aid in interpretation. In measure six, the second measure of singing, Foster sets the text “Listen to me!” with a major-sixth leap resolving down a major third, a melodic gesture that seems to imitate a whistle. The same text appears again at the end of each verse with a similar motive. This time the major-sixth leap does not resolve down, but lands more solidly on the beat, giving a more urgent feel than the first instance of this motive. The prevailing rhythmic pattern in the piece is dotted-eighth, sixteenth, eighth note. This lilting pattern, which seems to portray a slightly inebriated air, is easy for the singer to
fall into and forget when to sing straight eighth notes. The straight eighth-note pattern appears only a few times in the song, lending importance to the text setting.

Training

An extraction from previous exercise shows a few key techniques that are advised for “Open Thy Lattice, Love.”

1. Learn to coordinate quick register shifts through larger leaps.
2. Inhale quickly and correctly to maintain support through longer passages.
3. Use text and rhythms to drive the narrative.

It can be difficult for a student to learn this piece correctly, syncopated and non-syncopated eighth notes are both represented throughout the piece. It can be hard to recall the placement of these rhythms. It is important that a student engrain the patterns when initially encounter the piece. Speaking the words in rhythm will help them to associate where the word stresses fall.

Large ascending leaps are found throughout this piece. For a young tenor, these leaps will be transitioning from chest voice into mixed or head voice. The change in laryngeal function may be a difficult adjustment when done abruptly. The following exercises and lessons are designed to aid in register unification in conjunction with “Open Thy Lattice, Love.” According to Miller “Vocalises should begin in the easy speaking range of the voice and proceed only slightly above the primo passaggio.”

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These exercises allow a voice to leap into the *primo passaggio*, and are best executed on a single vowel. It may be helpful to use the vowels [u] and [i]. The closed nature of these sounds will assist in the transition, and more practically, they are the vowel used in the song. The next exercise can be used in conjunction with the other two if a student is having difficulties making the adjustment from heavy mechanism to light mechanism.

This exercise allows the singer to start with the Cricothyroid Dominant Production engaged, and eases into the larger leaps. If the legato is inconsistent with breaks between
the notes, have them slide between the transitions to assist in a natural adjustment of the larynx and gradual shifting in breath pressure.

Quick, easy inhalations are imperative for successful singing. A method used often by this author is to have a singer take a slow, deliberate inhalation. Make sure the breath is taken correctly and repeat the process a few times, allowing the singer to become aware of the sensations of a correct inhalation. Have the singer slightly accelerate the inhalation process, making sure that the sensations of correct inhalation are still the same. Continue accelerating the inhalation until the singer is creating quick breaths.

As the student transitions into singing the song, remind him of the following:

1. As he approaches the leaps make sure that the breath support does not collapse and that the top note is approached lightly.

2. Do not let the dance rhythm detract from the legato line.

When the student sings through the piece, note where, and why there are difficulties. Due to short strophes, a student may unknowingly disguise tense singing. Young tenors often encounter laryngeal elevation as pitches approach the secondo passaggio. On each jump to F#4 examine the neck and ensure that it is secure but not tensed and is coupled with a proper increase of breath energy. When the singer approaches the higher notes, the breath flow should be supported and the larynx unrestricted.

“Open Thy Lattice, Love” contains a few short rests that occur abruptly and often in the middle of the phrase, as in measures five and seventeen. These interruptions offer an opportunity to be playful with the character of the piece, but can be very interruptive

A singer may notice that in the first phrase there is a rest in the middle of the text, but no punctuation. These rests should not be treated as disruptions of the vocal line, but as lifts. The singer should be careful not to inaccurately elongate the rests, as this will disrupt the text, phrasing and tempo. A singer should find some sort of expressive reason for the rests. For example, the singer could think of them as sighs, or mere nervousness energy, characterizing how the singer might attempt win the heart of this young woman.¹⁰¹

Measures nine through twelve contain a large stretched out *rallentando.* The *rallentando* elongates this ascending phrase and adds musical tension, but may cause the student to slow down drastically in measure nine or ten. The timing of the phrase needs to be planned out so that the *rallentando* can be gradual and does not lose energy or slow down too much. The vocal line in these measures ascends through the singer’s *primo passaggio.* If the singer is having difficulties maintaining a natural and supported tone through this passage, have them first sing it without the *rallentando.* The line does not hold a great challenge to the singer when it is performed without slowing down. Once the passage has been sung successfully, gradually incorporate the *rallentando* (slow down only in measure twelve, then eleven and twelve, etc.) This should allow the singer to engrain good technique into the line and map out a consistent *rallentando.*

The poetry of this song clearly appealed to a young Stephen Foster; its naïve charms and fantastic imagery make it easily relatable to the young singer. Finding a good interpretation is not a difficult task with this piece. With only two strophes and an abundance of varied melodic writing, repetition does not become monotonous. Dynamic contour should be considered. Foster incorporates dynamic markings into the piano

¹⁰¹ Samantha Mowery. *Stephen Foster and American Song.* (Ohio State University, 2009), 70.
introduction and postlude, but does not include any during the text setting. One possible interpretation follows.

The young man begins to sing, “Open thy lattice love listen to me.” The dynamic here should be piano, and as Foster writes delicatamente. He does not want to rouse other sleeping individuals, but only the young maiden to whom he sings, so it must have an air of muffled excitement. As the singer starts the slow ascending line (measures eight through eleven) he should gradually crescendo as the excitement starts to overtake him. The short descent on measure twelve should be a relaxing of those emotions as the singer realizes that perhaps he may have become a bit too loud. The next line should begin slightly louder than the beginning of the song, as the singer finds a dynamic compromise between too loud and too soft. The final line of the first strophe should crescendo through “me” and into “While,” then decrescendo as the vocal line drops. A slight accelerando can accompany the sweet demand “Then open thy lattice, love listen to me.”

The second strophe should start a bit louder. The singer has not yet been shooed away from the house or reprimanded for disturbing the peace, so perhaps he is now a little more comfortable or brazen. This time as the ascending passage is approached the dynamic is already louder, giving the singer the ability to create an effective decrescendo through the line, and portray a sentimental or cherishing nature to his plea. In the next line, “His shell for a shallop will cut the bright spray, away o’er the waters, away and away,” the singer becomes carried away with his romanticism. Think of this as a whimsical joke, a manifestation of love riding over the ocean waves in a shell (possibly a
reference to the “shell” in the *Birth of Venus* painting by Botticelli). The final statement of “Open thy lattice” should now be sung with more urgency and importance, this is last time he will make his request.
CHAPTER 9

There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea

“There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea” is a comical song composed 1863. This song marked one of the more successful collaborations between Foster and young lyricist George Cooper. “There are Plenty of Fish in the Sea” is an example of a more theatrical style which arose in Foster’s writing due to their collaboration. Other collaborations in this style include “If You’ve Only Got a Moustache,” “My Wife is a Most Knowing Woman,” “Larry’s Goodbye,” and a duet titled “Mr. and Mrs. Brown.” Foster and Cooper’s collaborative relationship began in the winter of 1862-1863, only a year before Foster’s death on January 13, 1864. Twenty-three songs were published during their collaboration. Cooper’s poetic style often emulated Foster’s writing with nostalgic songs as “Katy Bell,” songs of war as “Willie has Gone to War,” and even the minstrel songs, “A Soldier in the Colored Brigade.” However, it is through the more comic theatrical songs that Cooper’s influence is most apparent in which the writing has a familiarity that Foster never allowed himself to use.102

Musical Features Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Fast-paced, syllabic text setting, melody contains stepwise motion as well as small and large leaps with none prevailing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Simple chordal relationships, mostly I, IV, V – tonicizes the relative minor for a line then returns to the toni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rhythm  | Imitates a drinking song in style, quick paced and dance-like, 6/8 meter, tempo is marked *vivace*, quarter-note and Eighth-note rhythms dominate the piece.
---|---
Form  | Strophic: three strophes
Accompaniment  | Driving chordal accompaniment, harmonically supportive, no melodic doubling
Text  | Fast paced, lively and comical text, the narrative the story is of a woman who lives frivolously waiting to settle down, but waits too long and comes to regret her carelessness
Key  | C-major
Range  | C3 – E4, remains mostly in a comfortable range to emulate speech, occasionally leaps into the higher register on cadences

**Pedagogical Analysis**

Range and Registration

“There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea” has an average range for a Stephen Foster song, extending an octave and a third. The highest note, E4, is sung once in each strophe; all other pitches remain between C3-C4. The song is recommended for a lower voiced male, either a baritone or bass since most lower-voiced males should have no difficulty singing within the range of C3-C4.
The E4 may be difficult, but because of the infrequency and placement of the note it can be easily achieved. The note in each strophe is paired with the word “sea.” The natural occurrence of the vowel formant for [i] is around 280Hz (C#4), note Fig. 9-1.103

Fig. 9.1

The [I] vowel has a naturally occurring formant at 370Hz (F#4). The optimal pharyngeal space for the E4 lays balanced between these two vowel sounds. Having the singer modify the vowel slightly towards [I] on this note will help to achieve a free and beautiful production.

Vocal Lines and Breath Management

“There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea” is a quick paced narrative. It holds a new set of difficulties for breath management when compared to the sentimental songs studied thus far. Much of the difficulty occurs when encountering more consonant sounds in a

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short period of time. This makes it difficult for a beginning singer to maintain consistency in their breath flow while clearly enunciating the text. The goal for the teacher and singer should be to secure an even legato throughout the song with emphasis on vowel-to-vowel connection remaining intact, otherwise the piece will become pedantic and exhausting. Clear and precise diction plays a major role in a successful performance of this song. Legato will often suffer in young singers for what they perceive to be good diction. In Singing: The Mechanic and Technic, Vennard states, “It is difficult to have good diction and good legato. However…the illusion of perfect legato need not be disturbed by strong diction. In Italian, the consonants are all the more brief. If they interrupt the vocal line at all, they do so imperceptibly. We doubtless carry as much of this as possible into the other languages when singing.”104

It is a noble goal to produce a vocal line in which the sound is never broken; however, in the English language it is often impossible. English, like German, often contains consonant sounds that require the voicing to be completely severed. In this case the goal is to maintain as consistent a flow of air as possible and shorten the length of the consonant, without detracting from its volume.105

Communication and Performance

This piece is the first Foster song analyzed which contains text written in the third person. This narrative is a story of a young woman who feels that there are “plenty of


fish in the sea” and has plenty of time to find one. Her carefree attitude gets her into trouble. She realizes that her youth has slipped away from her and there are no longer “plenty of fish in the sea.” This narrative is told in three verses with each verse containing a different mood and moral. The first verse is an introduction of the young girl and explains her frivolity; all the men who come to woo her are turned away. The second verse tells of the years flown by, in which her attitude has not changed. In the final verse the woman realizes she has waited too long and that no men are now interested in pursuing her. She laments: “There are plenty of fish in the sea, but, oh, they’re hard to be caught.”

This humorous anecdote is often easily understood and well performed by young males. The singer may become wrapped-up in the humorous aspects of the song, and ignore the technical and musical aspects of their singing. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the song is not only performed well, but is also held to the same level of technical proficiency that would be expected of a more lyrical song.

One of the major pedagogical advantages of this piece lies in its ability to improve diction. Much of the appeal of this piece comes from the alliteration and rhyme scheme present in the poetry. The difficulty lies in achieving clear, rhythmic diction while not allowing it to interrupt the legato line of the voice.

Training

This song has been included to allow a teacher to work on the aspects of vocal training pertaining to performance and communication, the main goals being twofold.
1. Achieve clear and strong diction while maintaining a supported legato vocal line.

2. Deliver a well-rounded and effective portrayal of the narrative while maintaining technical proficiency.

These two goals will be discussed, though other aspects of pedagogical training may be effectively addressed through this song as well.

When presenting the subject of articulation to a student, it is most helpful for the teacher to observe a singer’s speaking habits. Deficiencies in a speaking voice are usually mirrored in singing habits. Teachers should attempt to fix any articulatory deficiencies, or refer a student to a speech pathologist in more severe cases. In *Singing and Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Teaching Singing*, Janice Chapman outlines the physiological issues of articulatory inefficiencies in four categories: diagnosis in speech, diagnosis at rest, diagnosis in oromotor function, and diagnosis in singing. These outlines can assist in diagnosis for teachers and are included in the second appendix. Chapman also discusses correctional techniques for common articulatory issues including tongue-root tension, jaw tension, tongue-jaw-larynx functioning as a unit, tongue blade articulation/tongue-tip weakness or imprecision, inability to roll [r], and tongue tie. Tongue-root tension and tongue-jaw-larynx function will be addressed here as a unit.

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Tongue-root tension is a common occurrence in young male singers. Depression of the root of the tongue causes depression of the hyoid bone and consequently the larynx. The result is an increase of auditory feedback to the singer who may perceive that their sound is fuller and more “operatic.” The perception of the listener will be a muffled and affected tone, often referred to as a *knödel*. Aside from the tone being distorted, this issue also effects clarity in diction. To rectify this issue the tongue needs to remain relaxed and forward in the mouth.\(^{108}\) Chapman diagrams an effective exercise for solving this problem:

\(-\) Use of “th” (/θ or ð/) to pull whole tongue body forward. Vocal exercises or songs can be “sung” through on /ð/ to help release the tongue-root tension. This can be followed by /ð/ plus the singer’s best vowel, /ð/ plus the vowels from the exercise or song, and finally with the correct text. Hopefully, the singer will have experienced enough of the “free” sound to match the kinesthetic sensations of the “free” sound with the text. Recording this type of session also adds to the re-education of the singer’s aural perception of his or her own sound.

Adding this exercise in the training of “There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea” will be useful in achieving a proper tongue position as well as introducing a *legato* line into the song.\(^{109}\)

It is important that all the articulators remain facile throughout singing. Increases in tension to any mechanics of the vocal tract will affect the function of the rest of the unit. Chapman explains how the jaw, tongue, and larynx can be found working as a unit:

Due to muscular connections through the hyoid bone, it is possible for these three structures to work together as a unit instead of maintaining their separate functions as articulators or as a phonator. This undifferentiated functioning is usually a sign that there is marked tongue-


root and jaw tension which have an impact on the hyoid bone and thus on the larynx. The lack of interdependence of these structures is very inefficient from both an articulatory and phonatory point of view.110

Visible indicators of such an occurrence will be easily spotted:

1. The tongue and jaw will choreograph pitch change and will be more recognizable with wider intervals.

2. The jaw will articulate when forming tongue tip consonants. This can be noticed if the jaw closes after open-mouthed vowels followed by tongue-tip consonants.

3. Vibrato can be noticed in the mouth floor; the oscillation of natural vibrato will transfer into the tensed muscles of the tongue and jaw causing them to vibrate with the same frequency as the vibrato.

Removal of these defects is imperative to the acquisition of proper articulatory technique.

Exercises used for the removal of these occurrences each deal with maintaining jaw position through a variety of consonant sounds, which are formed by the tongue.111

One exercise, which greatly improves unity of movement in the jaw and tongue, is described below:

Start by having the singer place their tongue on their bottom lip so that it is protruding slightly from the mouth. While the tongue is in this position the singer should complete an exercise which varies the use of [i] and [a]. The jaw should move independently of the tongue; this reinforces individual motion of the jaw. Immediately

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following this the singer should perform an exercise that allows the tongue to move but
the jaw to remain constant. An exercise should be sung with one vowel sound and a
varying consonant pattern (tip of the tongue and back of the tongue consonant should be
used). Success depends entirely on the frequency of exercise completions. The student
should practice this often to create new muscular habits, and ensure muscle memory.

Figure 9.2 shows an example of how each step of this exercise can be performed.

Fig. 9.2

If the articulators are functioning in a healthy and consistent manner, focus should then
move to creating clear and precise diction while singing. Proper diction for singing
dictates that the consonant sound should not interrupt the legato or sung (vowel) line.

Richard Miller writes on this subject in *Solutions for Singers*:

> The consonant is not the natural enemy of the vowel. A quickly occurring consonant need not interrupt the legato any more than a twig cast upon a flowing mountain stream impedes the current. The consonant becomes culprit only when it encourages the vowel to fall victim to transition sounds in which the tongue forgoes its proper location, gliding onward toward an early introduction of the subsequent consonant. Each consonant must be rendered as cleanly as every vowel. Crisp, clean consonants are essential to linguistic clarity. Nonetheless, excessive lingering over the pitch consonants in unimportant words labors the line, while exaggerated unvoiced consonants interrupt vocal sound.\(^{112}\)

The following exercises include a variety of voiced and unvoiced consonants as well as a
variety of sustainable and unsustainable consonant lengths. It is important to remind a

student that this exercise is to be executed with crisp, clear consonant noise that do not impede the flow of sound.

Fig. 9.3

This exercise has a time signature of 6/8 and a rhythmic accompaniment that are similar to “There Are Plenty of Fish in Sea.”

Once the student has acquired sufficient proficiency creating clear and understandable diction without interrupting the legato line, move to singing “There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea.” When making the transition to song text it is imperative that the singer approach the consonant sounds in the same manner as was achieved in the two prior exercises.

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The second goal set for “There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea” was the delivery of an effective portrayal of the narrative text while maintaining technical proficiency. In *Acting for Singing*, by David F. Ostwald, a method for beginning interpretation of a song is presented:

Like the composer, you, too, can usefully start your interpretation from the text. Use it as a key to reveal what feelings the music may be exploring, then pay attention to the subtle nuances of feeling that the music is adding. What emotional colors does it suggest that you can use to give additional depth and believability to the choices you are making about your character?\(^{114}\)

The character portrayed in this piece is not a dramatic character singing in first person, but rather a narrator telling an anecdotal story in the third person. However, there are still musical and textual signals that portray emotional moments in the song. An initial read through of the text should identify key phrases and emotional moments. The entire text is as follows:

A lady tossed her curls at all who came to woo;
She laughed to scorn the vows, from hearts though false or true,
While merrily she sang; and cared all day for naught,
||: There are plenty of fish in the sea, as good as ever were caught. :||

Upon their lightning wings the merry years did glide,
A careless life she led, and was not yet a bride;
Still as of old she sang though few to win her sought.
||: There are plenty of fish in the sea as good as ever were caught. :||

At length the lady grew exceedingly alarmed,
For beaux had grown quite shy her face no longer charmed.
And now she sadly sings the lesson time has taught,
||: There are plenty of fish in the sea but, oh, they’re hard to be caught. :||\(^{115}\)


Three clear mood shifts can be identified in the text, each of which falls upon a stanza of the poetry. Each stanza aligns with each strophe of music. Defining these three mood shifts will allow the singer to make clear musical choices in each verse, adding variety to the song. For example, a mood to coincide with verse one would be carefree, verse two – careless, and verse three – regretful.

An exercise that further explores the emotional content of the text is outlined in Ostwald’s *Acting for Singers*:

**Exercise – viewpoint**

*Objective:* to explore a piece for its content and viewpoint.

*Instructions:* Choose an aria or song you know well. Make a list of six items or concepts about which it implies some judgment or interpretive comment. For each item write a brief summary.116

A completed exercise for “There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea” may look as follows:

1. *Vanity* – indulgent, arrogant
2. *Youth* – beauty, naivety, makes you more worthy of attention
3. *Passing of time* – loss of beauty and gaining of understanding
4. *Pressure to conform* – Societal norms are defined for a reason, but she feels above these norms
5. *Regret* – poor decisions have led to an unhappy position in life
6. *Hindsight* – an understanding of her poor choices and how they affected her life so negatively

Once the emotional content is completely understood by the singer, they may then begin to add musical inflections and nuance. Each musical interpretation will be different according to the singer’s use of emotional content in the song. The following is one possible interpretation of the song.

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First verse – start at a *mezzo-forte* in a conversational manner. The word “tossed” in the first line contains a lower neighbor tone which can be sung quickly and coyly, to add a playful quality to the music. A slight *crescendo* can accompany the move into measure seventeen and held at a higher dynamic level through the chorus. A louder dynamic level can add a sense of arrogance to the young woman. When reaching the chorus, a flippant air should be added to the text, which can be best achieved by stressing beats one and four and moving through the upbeats to emphasize the accompaniment’s dance-like rhythmic pattern.

Second verse – begin with a return to the original *mezzo-forte* and conversational style of singing, as if to return to the character of the narrator. A slight *crescendo* and *accelerando* may accompany the first six measures to show a passing of time and an increase of tension. In measure fifteen the dynamic level should be dropped slightly to deliver the phrase, “and was not yet a bride,” to help bring importance and weight to this statement. The dynamic level should remain low through the chorus while the voice carries an air of pity and remorse.

Third verse – start louder and excitedly to show the immediate change in mood. Relate to the alarm that the woman now experiences. Measure seventeen can start to relax as the moral is prepared and her fate is accepted. The final chorus should be sung with mock wisdom. More time can be taken on the *fermata* to allow a separation between “There are plenty of fish in the sea” and “But, oh, they’re hard to be caught.”
CHAPTER 10

Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway

“Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway” is possibly one of Foster’s most beloved songs amongst the art song community, and has been included in two of the more popular recordings of Stephen Foster songs. The song is an ode to beauty and innocence, asking the question “why should the beautiful ever weep, why should the beautiful die?”

Musical Features Chart

| Melody | Melody contains leaps and stepwise motion with neither predominating. There are no exceptionally large leaps, the largest being an ascending fourth. |
| Harmony | Contains a rounded binary form. The B section is transposed to the dominant key. Foster uses a vi chord throughout this piece, which is fairly unusual for his writing but adds a nice somber element to the piece. |
| Rhythm | Simple, predominantly quarter-notes and eighth-notes throughout the piece. |
| Form | Strophic, three stanzas. Each strophe follows a rounded binary form. |

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Accompaniment | Harmonically supportive and rhythmically driving, no doubling or counter-melodies.
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Text | Poetry by Foster, in praise of beauty and innocence.
Key | G Major, B section in dominant key
Range | C#3 - F#4, octave and a fourth

**Pedagogical Analysis**

Range and Registration

“Ah May the Red Rose Live Alway” is one of Foster’s more difficult songs for beginning singers. The range of the piece spans an octave and a fourth which is larger than any of the other songs studied thus far. The piece is lengthier, and contains long lines that should be optimally performed with one breath. Though the piece sustains a mid-range *tessitura*, the voice immediately jumps up to an F#4 in each verse. After singing the F# the voice is must remain in the upper register for an additional measure, singing D4, E4, D#4, and D4 again. This passage could prove difficult for lower voiced males. However, the piece contains many instances of lower-neighboring tones on C#3. The brevity of the note value does not allow for lingering or sinking into the pitch. Young tenors may lack vocal facility to sing these notes quickly with full tone color. The ideal voice part for this song would be baritone, or a low tenor.

This piece includes an abundance of descending phrases. The voice often begins on a D4, a note which lays in the *zona di passaggio* of baritones and lower tenors. If a consistent tone can be achieved on this note (an issue of creating increased breath energy that will be discussed in the next section) the descending passage that follows will allow
the singer to pass through the *primo passaggio* and achieve a healthy, un-pressed tone in
the lower registers of the voice. If vocal weight does not exist in the head register one
naturally maintains coordination as they descend into the chest register.

Vocal Lines and Breath Management

The slow lilting tempo combined with frequent use of *fermatas* creates some very
long four-bar phrases. For singers who already have a controlled technique of breath
management, this song can help to increase muscle awareness and improve coordination.

In *Singing: the Mechanic and Technic*, William Vennard notes the preparation required
in sustaining breath control through longer passages:

> First, there is the matter of getting enough breath with one inhalation. The
> principles of correct inspiration become all the more vital: the chest *must*
> be high at the outset, there *must* be sideward costal expansion, the
> abdomen *must* relax to allow the full descent of the diaphragm. This will
> not look to the audience like poor posture if the ribs are sufficiently
> expanded. A distended abdomen is a crime only when the chest is flat.118

These are the same principles that have already been understood by the singer, though
now greater breath endurance is needed, with reinforcement of those principals. Vennard
explains the use of air after proper inhalation.

> There must be no waste of the breath. Short-winded singers often take in
> air with obvious effort toward maximum chest expansion, but with the
> first word the thorax collapses. Some breath was thus lost on the first
> consonant, but the real catastrophe was that with the lowering of the ribs
> the abdomen and the diaphragm lost all their leverage for steady and
> controlled expiration. The *rectus abdominis* attaches in the middle and the
> *obliquus abdominis* at the sides to the lower ribs, and these bones should
> be held firmly in their elevated position while the heavy muscles of the
> belly, counterbalanced by the powerful diaphragm (the muscle of
> inhalation), smoothly maintain air pressure as the gas gradually escapes
> through the glottis. The lowering of the sides of the costal cage should

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Fischer, 1967), 33.
come at the end, not the beginning of the phrase, as a final expenditure of the “complimentary breath.”

In “Ah, May the Red Rose Live Alway” many of the phrases begin with the word “Ah,” that should be sung softly. A D4 that lies in the passaggio of the young baritone. In an attempt to lightly sing the note they will often expel an excess of air, creating a breathy tone. With a long phrase following these exclamations, execution of a controlled onset and consistent air pressure is essential for a successfully sung phrase.

Communication and Performance

“Ah, May the Red Rose Live Alway” is an ode to beauty. The song was written in 1850, at the height of Foster’s minstrel composition. It is an example of one of Foster’s parlor ballads, typically defined by the use of simple melodic phrases and sentimental poetry. The song’s beginning tells of the beauty of the rose, and questions why its beauty must fade so quickly. In the second verse the singer focuses on the daisy and praises its innocence. The final verse is sung in remembrance of these flowers after the autumn has overtaken them. The singer leaves the listener with the question, why must innocence be lost and beauty fade?

Stephen Foster includes many exclamation points at the ends of phrases, which may seem strange with the lyrical and reverent style of the music. The singer may interpret this punctuation as a character’s internal frustration. It should not add any external fricative.

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severity to the musical tone or ambience. As mentioned previously, many of the phrases begin with a *fermata*. An interpretation for the use of these fermatas can be found at [www.songofamerica.net](http://www.songofamerica.net) in which the author states, “After a brief piano introduction, the vocal line opens with a high D that is held with a *fermata*, perhaps to give the illusion of stalling the passage of time. Foster has placed additional *fermatas* throughout the song, possibly with similar effects in mind.”

Importance is placed on these first notes, the “Ah” which begins the piece must carry a great deal of emotional gravity, setting the mood for the entire piece, allowing the audience to understand the depth of caring felt by the singer.

**Training**

This is the most advanced of songs to be studied and includes goals for improving upon previously mentioned techniques. Four technical aspects can be improved in the study of this piece:

1. Healthy and spontaneous onsets within the *zona di passaggio*
2. Mechanical shifts in the larynx in the region of the *primo passaggio*
3. Breath support and coordination of breath energy through longer phrases
4. A lighter timbre in lower register

A spontaneous onset can often be a difficult coordination to achieve. It requires a balanced coordination between subglottal air pressure and vocal fold adduction, resulting in a healthy and vibrant sound. The two factors preventing a spontaneous onset lie in a

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failure to execute glottal closure and expulsion of air with balanced timing.\textsuperscript{122} If the exhalation begins before the glottis is closed, the onset will be breathy or aspirate. If the glottis is closed prior to the exhalation there will be a perceivable glottal attack. The following exercise is designed to produce a coordinated onset.

Fig. 10.1

Achievement of a coordinated onset is made more difficult when attempted in a higher register. The next exercise is designed to achieve a muscular coordination on multiple pitches. It should be transposed upward by half steps in order to move through the passaggio.

Fig. 10.2

It is essential that one feel the exhalation and phonation occurring simultaneously. If there is an excess of glottal pressure the coordination may be impaired.\textsuperscript{123}

The gently ascending and descending gestures of the melodic lines make this song ideal for increasing the muscular coordination of the middle range into the \textit{passaggio}. The phrases often begin in the \textit{zona di passaggio} then wind their way down into the mixed voice with occasional arches back into the \textit{passaggio}. This allows the muscles to gently shift their dominance, achieving a more fluid and seamless transition point. However, this piece contains relatively long vocal lines that should be sung in one breath. Running low on breath can often cause a decrease of breath energy and an increase of tension as one approaches the release of the phrase.\textsuperscript{124} The following exercise will allow the student to practice moving gently through the \textit{passaggio} while maintaining proper support through a longer phrase and most importantly, concluding with a relaxed release.

\textsuperscript{123}\textsuperscript{123} Richard Miller, \textit{The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique} (Boston: Schirmer Cengage Learning, 1996), 16.

Fig. 10.3  

Many young baritones add excessive pressure to the larynx or jaw in an attempt to achieve a more robust and mature timbre in their lower ranges. It is often useful to try to bring the lightness of the upper register into the lower registers of the voice. The following exercise is useful in bringing the sensations of lighter mechanism into the lower registers of the voice.

Fig. 10.4

Figure 10.4 comes from *Vocal Method, Op.31*, by Mathilde Marchesi.

All scales should be sung slowly at first, taking a breath at each bar, so that the voice may be well developed and equalized. The proper method of breathing is to stop after the first note of any measure, take breath during the remaining beats (of the measure) and start with the note just quitted, at the beginning of a fresh measure. When the pupil is more advanced, the speed may be increased and two or more measures taken in one breath.126

“Ah May the Red Rose Live Alway” will reinforce the lessons learned in these exercises. These new techniques will be tested with the first line of the song. The initial “Ah” onset must contain the same coordination as was obtained in the Miller exercises cited above. As the voice moves to a more comfortable range it is important that the singer avoid pressing the lower notes on “to smile upon…” The leap upwards of a seventh to the word “earth” will be extremely difficult if there is excess pressure. The techniques acquired in the Marchesi exercise will assist in this transition. Contrasting

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phrases in each verse arrive at measure seventeen, beginning with the words “Lending a charm.” These two lines gently ascend through the passaggio into the head voice, the continuous pattern assisting in blending the registration. Successful completion of the Marchesi exercise will provide a seamless transition between registers and produce unwavering breath support through the longer phrase. The remainder of the song continues with melodic figures set to different text and should not create additional difficulty.  

CHAPTER 11

Conclusion

The integration of repertoire study and directed technical acquisition creates a method in which students are able to improve effectively. Pairing repertoire with proven vocal exercises and pedagogical principals allows students to understand how vocal technique is applied to performance. Pedagogical analysis of repertoire provides clearly defined goals against which students are able to measure their success. A training guide creates a structure in which students are able to practice and achieve their goals.

In the early study of voice this method is extremely effective due to its ability to create understanding in vocal technique and repeatable results. Beginning male singers thrive when they are presented with clear achievable tasks and a comprehensive manner in which to make improvement. When vocal exercises are used in conjunction with vocal literature, students can replicate a process of advancement in the studio and in personal practice, leading to a more expedient and efficient acquisition of technical growth.

Stephen Foster’s songs provide an exceptional opportunity to employ this method due to the musical characteristics that define his compositional style. The melodic nature of Foster’s songs contain vocal lines that aid in acquisition of technique. Strophic forms allow for mastery of technique through repetition with slight changes to text and dynamic. Ranges remain reasonable but allow male singers to engage registration shifts. Accompaniments are supportive and rhythms are simple which allow accessibility to beginning musicians. Poetry is easily comprehended and text is set syllabically,
providing beginning male singers with opportunities to create an organic cadence of
delivery. These attributes allow the songs of Stephen Foster to stand out in American
vocal repertoire.
APPENDIX 1

Annotated Discography


This recording features quite a few less familiar Stephen Foster songs, including a few duets. Features a soprano and baritone with mostly piano accompaniments.


This recording contains two Stephen Foster songs, “Old Folks at Home” and “Beautiful Dreamer.” These are both choral arrangements of Foster’s songs.


This recording features much of the same material that appears on the other Thomas Hampson recordings. There are twelve tracks on this recording that feature Foster songs.


This recording includes a good variety of songs. Hampson’s singing is accompanied by a small group of instruments; violin, guitar, and banjo. Hampson’s attention to detail and informed performances make this one of the more trusted recordings of Foster’s songs.


This recording contains arrangements of Foster’s music for chorus and solo voice. The Rooke Chapel Choir is featured. The Foster songs that deal with patriotism and war are featured in this recording. Various instruments are featured throughout this recording including guitar, snare drum, flute, cello, and piano.


This recording contains choral arrangements of Foster’s music. There are twenty tracks on the CD, all of which are Foster songs. Some are very well-known and others are fairly obscure. Altogether a very well put together recording with the quality one would expect of The Robert Shaw Chorale.

Not every song on this recording is by Stephen Foster. The small ensemble of banjo, guitar, and violin plus the occasional other instrument play through a variety of folk-songs, many of which are by Stephen Foster. Thomas Hampson sings on this recording and reprises many of the same tracks that appear on his “American Dreamer” recording.


This is a very modern take on Fosters songs. The arrangements include electronic instruments and new accompaniments. The vocal melody is basically kept the same; but the interpretation is anything but authentic. This is not a recording that will be used for this study.
## GLOSSARY OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure Number</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Beginning breath support – sensation of <em>appoggio</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Breath support in higher <em>tessitura</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td><em>Staccato arpeggio</em> to Major tenth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Slow descending, head voice to chest voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Coordinated onsets, achieve proper sensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Series of coordinated onset exercises, part 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Series of coordinated onset exercises, part 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Series of coordinated onset exercises, part 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>“Gentle Lena Clare” opening line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>“Gentle Lena Clare” closing line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>“Katy Bell” opening line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Register unification – descending third/ascending fourth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Vowel wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Muscle usage chart – pitch raising and lowering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Ascending/Descending scales – to a fifth and a ninth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Ascending through <em>passaggio</em> with dynamic changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>74</td>
<td><em>Messa di voce</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Ascending leaps through <em>passaggio</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Ascending leaps through <em>passaggio</em> with descending scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Bringing light mechanism into heavy mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Vowel formant chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Jaw/tongue independent motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>Alternating consonant and vowels in 6/8 time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Advanced coordinated onset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Onset through multiple pitches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Series of ascending and descending scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Ascending octave leaps with descending scales</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


