

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: CIRQUE DE LA VOIX: VOCAL PERFORMANCES FOR THE  
21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY AUDIENCE

Jay G. White, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2005

Dissertation directed by: Professor Linda Mabbs  
School of Music

This dissertation addresses the growing need to entice people to attend a classical solo vocal recital by incorporating thematic programming, multi-media presentations, collaborations and innovative marketing. It comprises four programs that use the above tactics, creating live performances of classical vocal music that appeal to the attention-deficient 21<sup>st</sup>-century audience. Each program focuses on repertoire appropriate for the male alto voice and includes elements of spoken word, visual imagery and/or movement through collaborations with actors, singers, dancers, designers and visual artists.

Program one (March 1, 2004), *La Voix Humaine: The Life of an Englishwoman in Music, Poetry, & Art*, outlines the life of a fictitious Englishwoman through a self-composed narration, spoken by an actress, a Power Point presentation of visual art by 20<sup>th</sup>-century English artists and musical commentary provided by the collaboration of a vocalist and a pianist. Program two (October 15, 2004), *La Voix Thématique: Anima – Music that Moves*, is a program of pieces ranging from the 14<sup>th</sup>- to the 20<sup>th</sup>-centuries of which half are choreographed by members of the University of Maryland Dance

Department. Program three is a lecture recital entitled *L'Haute Voix: Identifying the High Male Voice and Appropriate Repertoire* which is presented in collaboration with three singers, a pianist, a harpsichordist and a cellist. Program four, *La Voix Dramatique: Opera Roles for the Countertenor Voice*, comprises performances of George Frederic Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto (1724)* in collaboration with the Maryland Opera Studio and the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (Leon Major, director; Kenneth Merrill, conductor). There are two performances each of the title role, Cesare (April 15 & 17, 2005), and his nemesis, Tolomeo (April 21 & 23, 2005). All programs are documented in a digital audio format available on compact disc and are accompanied by program notes also available in digital format. Programs two and four are also documented in digital video format available on digital video disc.

CIRQUE DE LA VOIX:  
VOCAL PERFORMANCES FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY AUDIENCE

by

Jay G. White

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
2005

Advisory Committee:

Professor Linda Mabbs, Chair  
Dr. Richard King  
Leon Major  
Professor Meriam Rosen  
Professor Delores Ziegler

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2005

*Cirque de la Voix: Vocal Performances for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Audience*

Presented in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree

by

Jay White, countertenor

Program Four (April 2005)

*La Voix Dramatique: Opera Roles for the Countertenor Voice*

**Project Background**

In the 21<sup>st</sup>-century it has become all too clear that we Americans are busy people. We eat lunch at our desks. We interrupt our vacations for a conference call. We get snippets of news from a “talking head”, a ticker tape, or a website. Our lives are so full of sound bytes, 15 second adverts, and instant messaging it is no wonder our attention spans have become greatly reduced over the decades.

In this day of short CNN and MTV attention spans, we classical musicians are finding it necessary to adapt our performances to appeal to a wider audience. As a solo artist, it is essential to offer one’s audience a holistic experience, providing them with a program that is diverse and easily transported from place to place. It is no longer *de rigueur* for a soloist to simply stand in front of the piano and sing a few pieces.

Contemporary audiences demand an experience that fills the senses. Live performances provide just that. In a live performance, an audience experiences the grief, the passion, and the joy of the performers that share their talent. The essence of the poetry and the composer’s intentions are palpable. No recording can do justice compared with an electrifying live performance. By presenting the audience with something on which to focus (a thematic program) and witness (projected images, movement, acting) they walk away from an event, an experience, *une merveilleux*. One of the greatest compliments a musician can receive is, “Your performance is so much better than your recording.” A live performance goes beyond the aural and fills the senses. With this in mind, I created a project entitled, *Cirque de la Voix: Vocal Performances for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Audience* which will tantalize the audience’s senses beyond simply the aural.

This project has been a four part series focusing on collaborations between actors, singers, dancers, and visual artists. The first performance, *La Voix Humaine: The Life of an Englishwoman in Music, Poetry, & Art*, outlined the life of a fictitious Englishwoman through an original narration, written by myself and spoken by a student of the Theatre Department, a showing of 20<sup>th</sup> century British artists, and a “soundtrack”, if you will, provided by the collaboration of a vocalist and a pianist. Program two, *La Voix Thématique: Anima: Music that Moves*, was a collaborative event between members of the School of Music and the Department of Dance. The theme of movement was incorporated into the performance through choreography of individual solo vocal pieces. Program three, *L’Haute Voix: Identifying the High Male Voice & Appropriate Repertoire*, was a lecture recital focusing on repertoire of the countertenor voice featuring

music from the 17<sup>th</sup>-, 18<sup>th</sup>-, and 20<sup>th</sup>-centuries. Program four, *La Voix Dramatique: Opera Roles for the Countertenor Voice*, is the program you are witnessing tonight.

This is an event, a once in a lifetime moment. Tonight can never be repeated. You are experiencing something new; something fresh; something real. No recording, however good, will have you experience what you will tonight.

I thank you all for being a part of this moment and for allowing me to share with you all of *Cirque de la Voix*.

### **Performer's Notes**

If you attended the third program of *Cirque de la Voix*, you heard me lecture on the history of the countertenor voice and appropriate repertoire for it. As Leon Major, Artistic Director of the Maryland Opera Studio, was deciding which opera would best suit both my voice type and those of my colleagues in the studio, he approached me in May 2004 with George F. Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and the title role; a role that is being played more and more by countertenors. At first, I was apprehensive about undertaking such a complex and challenging work but quickly came to the conclusion that this is a teaching institution that is willing to let students take risks. What better opportunity would I have to challenge myself to learn one of the greatest roles in opera history.

As it turned out, *Giulio Cesare* was to go into production for Spring 2005 and Leon was having difficulty choosing an opera for Fall 2004 for which my voice would be well-suited. Over the summer, we discussed the idea of me learning both of the title male roles in *Giulio Cesare*, Cesare and Tolomeo; an even greater challenge and one I chose to accept as the role of Tolomeo is one more commonly performed by countertenors.

As I began preparations for the two roles, I chose not to delve into characterizations or interpretations of the characters until I was to be directed by Leon. I, therefore, marched bravely forward into the enormous task of learning Cesare's eight arias and one duet and Tolomeo's five arias and allowed the music to begin dictating how I would form these two characters.

The music for Cesare characterizes the first Roman emperor as he was; bold, confident, refined and brilliant. His arias are filled with fast-moving florid passages of a melodic nature highlighting moments of *bravado*, as in his entrance aria "Presti omai", and power, as in "Quel torrente" and "Al lampo del armi". His more contemplative and private moments are characterized by *recitativo accompagnato* providing moments of serenity, as in "Alma del gran Pompeo", or desolation ("Dall ondosso periglio"). Having been first performed by the great alto castrato, Francesco "Senesino" Bernardi, the musical range of the role does suit the countertenor voice well with the exception of some lower notes. Fortunately, these lower notes need only be heard in the absence of well-appointed ornaments which can be used to aid the voice into a higher tessitura. Cesare's music is, if I may, empirical, powerful and marital; a testament to the man.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from Cesare both musically and as a character is his nemesis Tolomeo, King of Egypt. While Cesare's *fioratura* moments are primarily fluid and scalar, Tolomeo's are jagged, disjunct and unpredictable; a perfect characterization of this adolescent tyrant. In his opening aria, "L'empio, sleale, indegno", Tolomeo hurls insults at an absent Cesare accusing him of disturbing his peace with idle threats. Handel chooses to paint *disturbar così* with arpeggiated chords followed by a punctuated third beat in a three beat measure; a most "disturbing" pattern to be sure. Tolomeo's final two arias further exemplify his maniacal and childish behavior to two divergent ways. In "Si spietate", Tolomeo tries to verbally wound Cornelia, who has refused his advances, with off-beat accents on unaccented syllables and repetitions of "sveglia" (arouses). With "Domeró la tua fierezza", Tolomeo gets to gloat at his victory over his sister queen, Cleopatra, with wide intervals of fifths and sixths and jumpy eighth-note passages in a snide and spiteful triumphal dance. Originally performed by the alto castrato Gaetano Bernstadt<sup>1</sup>, the tessitura of this role lies a bit lower than Cesare's but the range is more or less the same<sup>2</sup>. As you listen to Tolomeo's music, you can imagine the fun Handel must have had in creating smarmy and unnerved music for this tyrannical miscreant.

Historically, Cesare is 52 when he arrives in Alexandria and Tolomeo is 13. I approached Leon with this dilemma and was pleased when he chose to not place the restriction of age on either character. While I have never been an omnipotent, forcible and authoritative emperor, nor a crazed, capricious and autocratic despot, I certainly am just as human as they were and was able to tap into parts of my life that allowed me to experience such diverse characters. Simply stated, Cesare is the benevolent, loving, confident and secure Jay that most people see while Tolomeo is the visceral, vile, conflicted and insecure Jay that is controlled, most of the time. Obviously, Tolomeo is markedly more interesting to play as I can, for want of a better phrase, play dirty.

### **Opera for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Audiences**

As a part of my dissertation, I was a bit concerned as to how I would connect a Baroque opera with my topic. As it turns out, I didn't have to do much of anything. Leon Major's concept of creating a timeless piece on the foundation of the game of chess instantly has appeal to a modern audience. His careful editing of the libretto and score to thrust the action forward while allowing reflection in the characters' arias gives the audience a sense of witnessing a sung play (a medium that looks back to the operas of Monteverdi and Cavalli). The contemporary, minimal set design and simple yet decorative costuming only aid in bringing a greater understanding of character and plot to the audience.

Exceedingly, contemporary performances of 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century opera have incorporated visual and audio effects ranging from projections on screens, characters suspended from bungee cords, arias heard through transistor radios and the like. The more creative and collaborative a production, the more enticing it is to a modern audience. Granted a "traditional" staging of a Puccini or Verdi opera will undoubtedly

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<sup>1</sup> The premiere performance of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (20 February 1724) had three castrati in its cast. Senesino as Cesare, Berenstadt as Tolomeo and the alto castrato Giuseppe Bigonzi as Nireno.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that Cesare's part is scored in soprano G-clef while Tolomeo's is in alto C-clef.

appeal to some today, but presenting a different side of opera, while it may turn away traditionalists will surely entice a newer audience to the medium.

## **Epilogue**

Throughout this learning experience I have asked why I would submit myself to such an immense challenge. The answer; this degree is a Doctor of Musical Arts, the terminal degree for a vocal performer. As a doctoral student I have continuously challenged myself to go beyond my limitations to then come to terms with what is and is not comfortable for me as a performer and educator. An opportunity to perform two major roles in one Handel opera at the same time will, most likely<sup>3</sup>, not happen again.

I thank my mentor Linda Mabbs, for allowing my vocal curiosity to flourish and Leon Major for helping to refine the “ham” in me. To the remainder of the vocal faculty, please continue to encourage your graduate students to “cross pollinate” with the other resident disciplines in the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. Thank you all for your supportive guidance.

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<sup>3</sup> A phrase I must thank Dr. Theodore Guerrant for instilling in my doctoral verbiage.

*La Voix Humaine*

*The Life of an Englishwoman in Music, Poetry, & Art*

**Jay White**

countertenor

**R. Timothy McReynolds**

piano

**Katharine Snow-Milon**

voice of Sylvia Blakely

Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Monday, March 1, 2004

5:30 pm

*Cirque de la Voix*  
*Vocal Performances for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Audience*

I

*La Voix Humaine*  
*The Life of an Englishwoman in Music, Poetry, & Art*

**The Experience**

Music: 20<sup>th</sup> Century English composers

Text: Various English poets and an original text by Jay White

Art: 20<sup>th</sup> Century British artists

Tonight is an experience. In this day of CNN and MTV attention spans, we classical music performers are finding it necessary to adapt our performances to appeal to a wider audience. The use of multi-media, thematic programming, collaborations, and flexible production values have recently become the “new wave” of live performances. With this in mind, I am beginning a series of performances here at the University of Maryland School of Music which will tantalize the audience’s senses beyond simply the aural.

Tonight, we have a telling of a tale, written by myself and spoken by a student of the Theatre Department, a showing of 20<sup>th</sup> century British artists, and a “soundtrack”, if you will, provided by the collaboration of a vocalist and a pianist.

**The Background**

Back in the late ‘80’s and early ‘90’s, I became familiar with the church music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gerald Finzi, Herbert Howells, and Benjamin Britten while a member of the National Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys. I found their choral works to be ethereal, uplifting, and spiritual. I took this newfound interest back to the University of Maryland, where I was finishing a Bachelor of Music degree, and began to look at secular vocal works by these composers.

I began first with Vaughan Williams and his *Four Last Songs*. He set the poetry of his wife Ursula in a most intimate and achingly personal manner. I began to wonder about their relationship towards the end of his life and while singing the set, created a story to fit the

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text. A story began to unfold as I explored works by the other composers. Pretty soon an arch took shape outlining the life of a fictitious woman, "Sylvia Blakely". Finzi's, *Let Us Garlands Bring: Five Shakespeare Songs*, became a "cold reading" for Sylvia in her university drama class where she meets her future husband, "Martin"; Britten's, *Charm of Lullabies*, became a battle between chaos and care as Sylvia raises their child, "Giles"; and Howells', *Songs of a Maiden*, became a melancholy reflection on happier times.

This story, while certainly one that was most likely not intended by the composers or their poets, is derived by my interpretation of the text and the manner in which the composers set them. These are words that Sylvia could have spoken. In fact, the emotions and meanings within these pieces are ones that can be experienced by anyone.

Throughout history, people have interpreted music and text in a variety of ways sometimes coming to similar conclusions and often disparate summations. For example, Britten's setting of John Philip's, *The Nurse's Song*, is most commonly revered as a simple lullaby designed to bring peace and, eventually, sleep to a baby. In tonight's performance, Sylvia has an entirely different approach to Philip's text; yet, again, one that can be shared by others.

Once Sylvia's story was complete, I decided the element of visual art could help to enhance it. I searched for contemporary artists of the composers and chose images on the theme of women. Each song has a corresponding piece. Of course, each work of art has its own story but given the context of the music and texts of tonight's program, these works belong to Sylvia's story.

This is an event, a once in a lifetime moment. Tonight can never be repeated. You are experiencing something new; something fresh; something real. No recording, however good, will have you experience what you will tonight.

I thank you all for being a part of this moment and look forward to sharing with you the rest of *Cirque de la Voix*.

The Text

Finzi: *Let Us Garlands Bring*, Op. 18 (1939)

Text: William Shakespeare

**Come away, come away, Death,**  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away, breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,  
O, prepare it!  
My part of death, no one so true  
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,  
On my black coffin let there be strown;  
Not a friend, not a friend greet  
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.  
A thousand thousand sighs to save,  
Lay me, O where  
Sad true lover never find my grave,  
To weep there!

Work: *Twelfth Night*, II, 4

Sung by: Clown to Duke of Illyria

**Who is Silvia? what is she,**  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair, and wise is she;  
The heaven such grace did lend her,  
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness.  
Love doth to her eyes repair,  
To help him of his blindness;  
And, being helped, inhabits there.  
Then to Silvia let us sing,  
That Silvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling:  
To her let us garlands bring.

Work: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, 2

Sung by: Host to Julia

**Fear no more the heat o' the sun,**  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimneysweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,  
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;  
Fear not slander, censure rash;  
Thou has finished joy and moan:  
All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!  
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!  
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!  
Nothing ill come near thee!  
Quiet consummation have;  
And renowned be thy grave!

Work: *Cymbeline*, IV, 2

Sung by: Guiderius & Arviragus in alternation

**O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?**  
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low:  
Trip no further pretty sweeting;  
Journey's end in lovers' meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;  
Present mirth hath present laughter;  
What's to come is still unsure:  
In delay there lies no plenty,  
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Work: *Twelfth Night*, II, 3

Sung by: Clown to Aguecheek & Belch

**It was a lover and his lass,**

With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino  
That o'er the green cornfield did pass  
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey dingadingading:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
These pretty country folks would lie,  
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey dingadingading:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
How that life was but a flower  
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey dingadingading:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
For love is crowned with the prime  
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey dingadingading:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Work: *As You Like It*, V, 3

Sung by: Two Pages to Touchstone & Audrey

Britten: *A Charm of Lullabies*, Op. 41 (1947)

***Sephestia's Lullaby***

**Robert Greene**

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;  
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.  
Mother's wag, pretty boy,  
Father's sorrow, father's joy;  
When thy father first did see  
Such a boy by him and me,  
He was glad, I was woe;  
Fortune changed made him so,  
When he left his pretty boy,  
Last his sorrow, first his joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;  
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.  
The wanton smiled, father wept,  
Mother cried, baby leapt;  
More he crowéd, more we cried,  
Nature could not sorrow hide:  
He must go, he must kiss  
Child and mother, baby bliss,  
For he left his pretty boy,  
Father's sorrow, father's joy.  
Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;  
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

***A Charm***

**Thomas Randolph**

Quiet, sleep! or I will make  
Erinnys whip thee with a snake,  
And cruel Rhadamanthus take  
Thy body to the boiling lake,  
Where fire and brimstone never slake;  
Thy heart shall burn, thy head shall ache  
And ev'ry joint about thee quake;  
And therefore dare not yet to wake!  
Quiet, sleep! Quiet!

Quiet, sleep! or thou shalt see  
The horrid hags of Tartary,  
Whose tresses ugly serpents be,  
And Cerberus shall bark at thee,  
And all the Furies that are three  
The worst is called Tisiphone,  
Shall lash thee to eternity;  
And therefore sleep thou peacefully.  
Quiet, sleep! Quiet!

*The Nurse's Song*

John Philip

Lullaby baby,  
Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be.  
Be still, my sweet sweetening, no longer do cry;  
Sing lullaby baby.

Let dolours be fleeting, I fancy thee, I,  
To rock and to lull thee I will not delay me.

Lullaby baby,  
Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be.  
The gods be thy shield and comfort in need!  
Sing lullaby baby.  
They give thee good fortune and well for to speed,  
And this to desire I will not delay me.

Howells: *Four Songs, Op. 22*

"There was a Maiden" from *Undine*  
William Leonard Courtney

There was a kingdom fair to see,  
But pale, so pale, with never a rose:  
The cold wind blows across the lea,  
Westward the pale sun goes.

There was a maiden, soft and dear,  
But pale, so pale, with never a rose:  
Each quiv'ring eyelid holds a tear,  
Seaward her sad heart goes.

*A Madrigal*  
Austin Dobson

Before me, careless, lying,  
Young Love his wares came crying,  
Full soon the elf untreasures  
His pack of pains and pleasures  
With roguish eye,  
He bids me buy from out his pack of treasures.

His wallet's stuffed with blisses,  
with true-love knots and kisses,  
With rings and rosy fetters,  
And sugar'd vows and letters.  
He holds them out with boyish flout,  
And bids me try the fetters.

But it wa

"Nay, child," I cry, "I know them;  
There's little need to shew them!  
Too well for new believing  
I know their old deceiving, I am too old,"  
I say, "and cold,  
Today, for new believing!"

Vaughan V  
Text: Urst

"

But still the wanton presses,  
With honey-sweet caresses,  
And still, to my undoing,  
He wins me with his wooing,  
To buy his ware  
With all its care,  
It's sorrow and undoing.

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*The Widow Bird*  
Percy Bysshe Shelley

A widow bird sat mourning for her love,  
Upon a wintry bough;  
The frozen wind crept on above,  
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare  
No flower upon the ground;  
And little motion in the air,  
Except the millwheel's sound.

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*Girl's Song*  
Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

I saw three black pigs riding  
In a blue and yellow cart  
Three black pigs riding to the fair  
Behind the old grey dappled mare,  
But it wasn't black pigs riding  
In a gay and gaudy cart  
That sent me into hiding  
With a flutter in my heart.

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I heard the cart returning,  
The jolting, jingling cart,  
Returning empty from the fair  
Behind the old jog-trotting mare  
But it wasn't the returning of a clatt'ring empty cart,  
That sent the hot blood burning  
And throbbing thro' my heart.

Vaughan Williams: *Four Last Songs*  
Text: Ursula Vaughan Williams

**"Procris" (1958) from *Fall of Leaf***

Procris is lying at the waterside,  
the yellow flowers show spring,  
the grass is green,  
before a gentle wind the thin trees lean towards the  
rushes,  
the rushes to the tide.

She will not see the green spring turn to summer,  
summer go in a long golden dusk towards the snow,  
with eyes so lit by love  
that everything burned, flowed, grew, blossomed,  
moved on foot or wing  
with the guessed rhythm of eternity.

All her hope and will flowed from her unavailing  
and she knew darkness, as her eyes know now shut to the  
daylight, and despair prevailing she saw no way to go.

**"Tired" (1956) from *Fall of Leaf***  
Sleep, and I'll be still as another sleeping  
holding you in my arms,  
glad that you lie so near at last.

This sheltering midnight is our meeting place,  
no passion or despair or hope divide me from your side.

I shall remember firelight on your sleeping face,  
I shall remember shadows growing deeper  
as the fire fell to ashes and the minutes passed.

**"Hands, Eyes, and Heart" (?1956) Part VI of  
"Prologue" in *No Other Choice***

Hands, give him all the measure of my love surer  
than any word.

Eyes, be deep pools of truth, where he may see a  
thought more whole than constancy.

Heart, in his keeping, be at rest and live as music  
and silence meet, and both are heard.

**"Menelaus" (1954) from *Silence and Music***

You will come home, not to the home you knew  
that your thought remembers, going from rose to  
rose along the terraces and staying to gaze at the  
vines and reeds and iris beside the lake in the  
morning haze.

Forgetting the place you are in where the cold  
seawinds go crying like gulls on the beach where  
the horned sea poppies grow.

Homesick wanderer, you will come home to a  
home more ancient, waiting your return: sea frets  
the steps that lie green  
under waves and swallows nest below lintel and  
eaves: there lamps are kindled for you, they will  
burn till you come, however late you come, till the  
west wind's sheltering wing folds round your sail  
and brings you to land.

Stretch out your hand, murmuring lapping sea and  
the lamps and the welcome wait to draw you  
home to rest.

You shall come home and love shall fold you in  
joy and lay your heart on her breast.

## The Composers

### Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)

Britten returned from a stay in North America (1939-42) with the idea of focusing his mind on opera and began with *Peter Grimes*. With Peter Pears, he began to cultivate a consortium of colleagues to aid him in his endeavors; among them, Joan Cross, Eric Crozier, & Nancy Evans. His early operas were not fanatically received leaving Britten a bit vulnerable.

In 1947, a particularly busy year for Britten, he proposed starting the Aldeburgh Festival giving him the opportunity to surround himself with those who shared his ideas and interests. It was during this time that he composed *A Charm of Lullabies*, Op. 41 (1947) written for the mezzo-soprano, Nancy Evans; a friend and favorite of Britten. Ms. Evans had doubled the part of Lucretia in Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* with the mezzo-soprano, Kathleen Ferrier. He also began the English Opera Group, along with Eric Crozier, soon to be husband of Ms. Evans, which opened the Glyndebourne Festival, producing *Albert Herring*.

Without a doubt, Britten was as gifted, if not more so, than his forefather, Henry Purcell, in unparalleled settings of the English language. His careful treatment of text brings the listener to an understanding of the essence of the poetry.

### Gerald Finzi (1901 – 1956)

Finzi's favorite baritone, Robert Irwin, sang the premiere of *Let Us Garlands Bring* composed for the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of his colleague and friend, Ralph Vaughan Williams. It appears that "O Mistress Mine" was a bit of an after-thought taking Finzi 3 months to compose it (his struggle seems apparent in the jilted rhythms and complex harmonies). These pieces were so well received that Finzi was asked by the BBC to write an arrangement for strings performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Finzi experienced grief too soon in his life when by the age of eight, he had lost his father, his three elder brothers, and his first, and favorite, music teacher (presumably all died in war). Perhaps due to these tragedies, he was a dedicated pacifist and was convinced that "the creative artist is the prime representative of a civilization." (McVeagh, D. *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Vol. 8, p. 877).

## Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)

A master composer of Anglican church music, Howells studied under Charles Villiers Stanford and Charles Wood at the Royal College of Music. While there he began to work under Sir Herbert Parry (a relationship that was long lasted).

Howells' *Four Songs* were written just after his studies at the RCM when he wrote a majority of his songs for solo voice. Howells' reputation as a prominent composer waned in the 1920's and '30's and it wasn't until the late 1940's that he gained respect as a composer of cathedral music. It is this music that placed Howells back into the upper echelon of 20<sup>th</sup> century English composers.

On a personal note, when I was singing in the Washington National Cathedral choir, we premiered Howells' setting of the Canticles (*Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis*) written for the completion and dedication of the cathedral. This single work, in addition to his *Hymnus paradisi*, brought a greater understanding to the care and consideration Howells took writing his music for great spaces. While these two pieces are moving as "grand" works, the four songs sung tonight are moving on a much more intimate level.

## Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

R.V.W.'s *Four Last Songs* received little critical notice after being published posthumously. Renée Chérie Clark, in her article in *Vaughan Williams Essays* (Adams, B. & Wells, R. (2003). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.), remarks that the most extensive amount of information on these songs can be found in a volley of letters sent back and forth between R.V.W.'s wife, Ursula, and Ernest Chapman, The Honourable Secretary of the Macnaghten Concerts, in 1958. Through this correspondence we find that these songs were to be part of two song cycles and never intended to be lumped into one set. The following is a quote from a letter from Ursula to Mr. Chapman as programme notes for a November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1959 performance:

*Four Last Songs* are fragments of two projected song cycles.

*Procris* was suggested by the picture by Piero di Cosimo in the National Gallery.

*Menelaus* was written by both author and composer after reading about the return from Troy in T. E. Lawrence's translation [of] the *Odyssey*: this song is dedicated to Keith Falkner who sang it as one of the Arts Concil's recitals of English Songs at the Wigmore hall in 1955.

*Tired* belongs to a second cycle, as does the fourth song, which is a woman's song and so cannot be included in the group tonight (set was to be sung by a man, however, R.V.W. had asked Keith Falkner to sing "Hands, Eyes and Heart" in his B.B.C. concert in May of 1955).

In Ursula Vaughan Williams' biography on her husband (1964, Oxford University Press), she writes the following on her gift of *Menelaus*:

...Keith sang a new song which we had brought to America for him as a present. One day (Ralph) had been reading that part of the fourth book (of Homer's, *The Odyssey*) that tells of Menelaus and Proteus at Pharos... The same day I wrote some verse which I left on Ralph's table before I went out to work in the garden. When I came in the song was almost finished. This, like very few other of his songs, was written in one day.

The melding of words, music, and imagery in these four songs was paramount to Ursula and R.V.W. as Clark says, "...it is perhaps more important to regard this group of songs as the synthesis of literature, poetry, visual art, and music that informs and enriches so many of Vaughan Williams's works."

## The Poets

**William Leonard Courtney (1850 – 1928):** Information for Courtney is sketchy, at best. His greatest achievement seems to be the literary piece “Undine”.

**Austin Dobson (1840 – 1921):** Dobson’s work, “like a lavender sachet or an old-fashioned rose, retains a charm and sweetness undiminished by time.”

**Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (1878 – 1962):** “Whether in descriptions of rural life, his dramatic works or his war poetry, he had a simple, direct style (that captured) the essence of lives with an economy of language and imagery.”

**Robert Greene (1558 – 1592):** “After university, Greene led a dissolute life on the Continent before returning to England where he lived the life of a self-professed malcontent.”

**John Philip (1775 – 1851):** A relatively unknown poet whose success did not match his contemporaries.

**Thomas Randolph (1605 – 1635):** “Modern criticism has not ranked Randolph quite so highly... in part by knowledge of Randolph’s death before his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and of his drinking habits.”

**William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616):** He achieved distinction outside of the educational “Golden Triangle” of Oxford-Cambridge-London which explains “some of the resentment... in established writers like Greene.”

**Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822):** “At the elite Eton College, ‘Mad Shelley,’ as he was called, acquired a fascination with science and was mercilessly bullied.” Expelled from Oxford; married hastily; political activist.

**Ursula Vaughan Williams (b. 1911):** As the wife of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Ursula’s literary work was well received but not critically acclaimed.

Quotes: Serafin, S. & Myer, V. G. (Eds.) (2003). *The Continuum Encyclopedia of British Literature*. London, UK: Continuum.

## The Artists

**Cecil Collins (1908 – 1989):** The work of Collins seems to be small and under appreciated.

**Robert Colquhoun (1914 – 1962):** “After he (was) evicted from (his) studio in 1947, his fortunes began to decline and he died (of a heart attack) in relative obscurity.”

**Sir Jacob Epstein (1880 – 1959):** American-born sculptor. He created many nude sculptures inviting “verbal attacks and acts of vandalism” which became a staple in his career. He became a British citizen in 1911 and knighted in 1954.

**Duncan Grant (1885 – 1978):** “Grant’s later painting was generally much more traditional, and many critics consider that he was at his best as a designer.”

**John Gwen (1876 – 1939):** No information could be found on this painter. This may be one of his only pieces.

**Josef Hermann (1911 – 2000):** Information on Hermann is small. He was a German who emigrated to England and received small acclaim as an artist.

**David Jones (1895 – 1974):** He was also a writer whose work *In Parenthesis* (1937) was declared a work of genius by T. S. Eliot and Jones received the coveted Hawthornden Prize.

**Bernard Meninsky (1891 – 1950):** This artist has escaped fame and, presumably, fortune.

**William Scott (1913 – 1989):** “Although (Scott’s) work was restricted in range, (he) was regarded as one of the leading British painters of his generation.”

**Walter Richard Sickert (1860 – 1942):** A third generation painter, Sickert trained as an actor. He eventually became a student of the famous Whistler and worked with Degas. In the end, he was best known for his teaching and writing.

**Euan Uglow (1932 – 2000):** Uglow is particularly known for his female nudes.

**Leon Underwood (1890 – 1975):** Critics referred to Underwood as the “father of modern sculpture in Britain.”

**Christopher Wood (1901 – 1930):** “In a remarkably short time he achieved a position of high regard..but he was emotionally unstable and his early death was probably suicide (he was killed by a train).”

Quotes: Chilvers, I. & Osborne, H. (Eds.) (1997). *The Oxford Dictionary of Art (New Edition)*. Oxford, UK: OUP.

## **The Collaborators**

**Jay White**, countertenor, has enjoyed a variety of performing experiences ranging from the works of medieval and Renaissance composers to the Baroque masters to contemporary compositions. As a soloist he has appeared with the Washington National Cathedral Choir, Grace Cathedral Choir (San Francisco), Indiana University Opera Theatre and Pro Arte Singers, the BOMB Ensemble, Bimbetta, Ensemble Mirable, Smithsonian Players, Tafelmusik and the Seattle and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestras among others. His opera credits include Pisandro in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*, Secretary No. 3 in Adam's *Nixon in China*, and Giasone in Cavalli's *Il Giasone*. Trained by Drew Minter, Michael Chance, Paul Elliott, and Linda Mabbs, Mr. White has been hailed by the London *Times* as "a counter tenor of rare tone". Mr. White sang eight seasons with the two-time (1999 & 2002) GRAMMY® Award-winning ensemble Chanticleer, travelling to over 40 states and 15 countries, and sharing the stage with Frederica von Stade, Dawn Upshaw, the San Antonio, Atlanta and Virginia Symphonies, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. He can be heard on the Angel/EMI, Focus, New Albion, and Teldec labels.

**R. Timothy McReynolds**, piano, is a frequent collaborator with singers in the Washington/Baltimore area. He is assistant music director for Towson's *Music for the Stage* and a piano faculty member of Loyola College of Maryland. He holds degrees from Indiana University and the University of Michigan, and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland. He has worked along side film and Broadway soprano, Marni Nixon, American composers William Bolcom, John Musto and Richard Hundley, and Metropolitan Opera tenor, Anastasios Vrenios. Mr. McReynolds has toured internationally with Columbia Artists, and has given concerts and masterclasses in Mexico and Germany. He has also performed with acclaimed bass-baritone, the late William Warfield. Upcoming events include recitals at Strathmore Hall in Washington, cabaret performances with Carolyn Black-Sotir throughout the area, and recitals with the Discovery Series of the Washington Vocal Arts Society.

**Katharine Snow-Milon**, is pursuing two Bachelor of Arts degrees in English and Theatre.

Much gratitude must be given to Linda Mabbs, Delores Ziegler, Leigh Smiley, Robert Tudor, Craig Resta, & the Staff of the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center.

The Series

*Cirque de la Voix*  
Vocal Performances for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Audience

I

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The University of Maryland School of Music  
*presents*

**“La Voix Humaine:  
The Life of an  
Englishwoman in Music,  
Poetry, and Art”**

**Jay White**  
*countertenor*

with

**R. Timothy McReynolds**  
*piano*

and

**Katharine Snow-Milon**  
*voice of Sylvia Blakely*

Monday, March 1, 2004, at 5:30 pm  
Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall  
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center  
University of Maryland, College Park



# program

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**Let Us Garlands Bring, Op. 18 (1939)**

**Gerald Finzi**

1901-1956

- I. Come away, come away death
- II. Who is Silvia?
- III. Fear no more the heat o' the sun
- IV. O Mistress Mine
- V. It was a lover and his lass

**from A Charm of Lullabies, Op. 41 (1947)**

**Benjamin Britten**

1913-1976

3. Sephestia's Lullaby
4. A Charm
5. The Nurse's Song

**Four Songs, Op. 22**

**Herbert Howells**

1892-1983

- I. There was a Maiden (1915)
- II. A Madrigal (1916)
- III. The Widow Bird (1915)
- IV. Girl's Song (1916)

**Four Last Songs**

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**

1872-1958

- Procris (1958)  
Tired (1956)  
Hands, Eyes, and Heart (?1956)  
Menelaus (1954)

*Please refrain from applause until the conclusion of the program.  
This program will be performed without intermission.*

*This recital is being presented in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree.  
Jay White is a student of Linda Mabbs.*

# about the Center

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The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland opens new doors to performance and learning experiences for the many communities within and around the University. Dynamic and spirited, the Center is firmly committed to programming that integrates learning, service and performance, actively engaging people in arts exploration and providing artists with a collaborative environment to nurture their talents and present their art. The Center's mission is reflected in its unusual building design, evocative of a community for the arts, which unites six intimate performance spaces, three performing arts academic departments, a performing arts library and rehearsal and classrooms under one roof.

CLARICE SMITH  
PERFORMING ARTS  
CENTER AT MARYLAND



Please remember to silence beepers, watch alarms, and cellular telephones.

Photography or recording of any kind without advance permission is prohibited.

Out of consideration for the artists and the audience, please note that no one will be seated while music is being performed. Latecomers will be seated at the first appropriate interval.

**Notice:** For your own safety, look for the nearest exit.

In case of emergency, walk, do not run, to that exit.

The University of Maryland School of Music  
*presents*

**Jay White**  
***countertenor***

**with**

**Jeanne Fischer, *soprano***  
**Tony Boutté, *tenor***  
**Daniel Daughtry-Weiss, *baroque cello***  
**Michelle Roy, *harpsichord***  
**Scott Crowne, *piano***

**Lecture Recital:**  
***L'Haute Voix: Identifying the High Male***  
***Voice and Appropriate Repertoire***

March 8, 2005 at 5:30PM  
Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall  
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center  
University of Maryland

# program

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**Duetto: Luci barbare spietate** (1721)

**Giovanni Bononcini**  
(1670-1747)

Jay White, countertenor  
Jeanne Fischer, soprano  
Daniel Daughtry-Weiss, baroque cello  
Michelle Roy, harpsichord

**Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac, Op. 51** (1952)

**Benjamin Britten**  
(1913-1976)

Jay White, countertenor  
Tony Boutté, tenor  
Scott Crowne, piano

*This recital is being presented in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree.  
Jay White is a student of Linda Mabbs.*

# about the Center

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The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland opens new doors to performance and learning experiences for the many communities within and around the University. Dynamic and spirited, the Center is firmly committed to programming that integrates learning, service and performance, actively engaging people in arts exploration and providing artists with a collaborative environment to nurture their talents and present their art. The Center's mission is reflected in its unusual building design, evocative of a community for the arts, which unites six intimate performance spaces, three performing arts academic departments, a performing arts library, and rehearsal spaces and classrooms under one roof.



**Please Note:** As a courtesy to the performers and your fellow patrons, please turn off all cell phones and pagers (or leave them with the House Manager with your seat location); please remember that food, drink, smoking, photography, recording (audio and video) and animals (other than service animals) are not permitted in the performing spaces; please refrain from unnecessary talking, noise, or disruptive behavior; please note that we make every effort to start on time and we recommend that you arrive at least 15 minutes before the performance time (latecomers are delayed entry and ushered in at an appropriate seating break determined in consultation with the artist); for your own safety in case of an emergency, look for the nearest exit – walk, do not run to that area.

*Cirque a la Voix:*  
Vocal Performances for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Audience  
*L'Haute Voix:*  
Identifying the High Male Voice and Appropriate Repertoire

What is a Countertenor?

Giles, Peter. *Countertenor*. Vol. 6. 27 vols. Second ed. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Stanley Sadie. Oxford, England: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001.

A male high voice, originally and still most commonly of alto range, though the title is increasingly employed generically to describe any adult male voice higher than tenor. Historically, it derived in England from the *contratenor* line in late medieval and Renaissance polyphony, via *contratenor altus*, which – used interchangeably – became ‘countertenor’ and ‘altus’, then alto and, later still, even ‘male’ alto.

*Countertenor*. Second ed. The Oxford Dictionary of Music, ed. Michael Kennedy. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1994.

High male v. not to be confused with male alto, falsetto, or castrato and with a strong, almost instr. purity of tone. Was popular in Handel’s and Purcell’s lifetimes and has been revived in 20<sup>th</sup> cent. Largely thanks to artistry of Alfred Deller. Several modern composers, incl. Britten in his opera *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, have written parts for countertenor. With the search for authenticity in perf. of early mus., it has reclaimed many roles in baroque works long since assigned to conts. or tens.

*Countertenor*. The Norton/Grove Concise Encyclopedia of Music: Revised and Enlarged, ed. Stanley Sadie. London, England: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988. Reprint, 1994.

Originally, English term for *contratenor*; later, a male voice at alto pitch. Countertenor singing has particularly flourished in England, where older choral foundations have continued to prefer male voices to sing alto parts. It has been argued that the countertenor voice is a natural continuation upwards of the tenor, to about *d*” or even higher, as distinct from the true male alto which is a falsetto voice. Others argue that the voices are really the same. It is a question for keen dispute and probably not susceptible of resolution. Countertenors are now often used for castrato parts in operas and other works, although their voices lack the castratos’ power.

*Countertenor*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. 1 ed. The New Oxford Companion to Music, ed. Denis Arnold. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983. Reprint, 1984.

The adult male voice with a range corresponding roughly to that of the female soprano or contralto. It is usually produced by developing the falsetto register, though occasionally it is a naturally very high, light tenor. Sometimes the term ‘male alto’ is used for the latter, but the terms are usually interchangeable.

*Countertenor*. The New Harvard Dictionary of Music, ed. Don Michael Randel. London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986.

(1) *Contratenor*. (2) A male alto who sings falsetto.

## Collaborators

Tenor **Tony Boutté** regularly performs with leading ensembles in this country and abroad, including Les Arts Florissants, New York Collegium, Tafelmusik, Washington Bach Consort, Les Talens Lyriques, Boston Baroque, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, Violins of Lafayette and the Portland Baroque Orchestra. He has also appeared at the Salzburg Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Santa Fe Opera, Bard Festival, and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival. Upcoming concerts include works by Bach in New York, New Jersey and Washington DC, and a Canadian tour with Les Violons Du Roy. Upcoming opera projects include title roles in works by Handel and Vivaldi, and roles in works by Lully and Sacchini with Violins of Lafayette. Tony is currently in the Doctoral program in Vocal Performance at University of Maryland where he is a student of François Loup.

**Scott Crowne**, piano is pursuing a DMA at the University of Maryland where he is a student of Rita Sloan. He also enjoys a varied and active career in the Baltimore/Washington area. He appears regularly in recital as a piano soloist, collaborator, and continuo player. He is a répétiteur for the Maryland Opera Studio, assisting as coach, rehearsal pianist, and performance pianist. He has worked as a staff pianist for singers at summer festivals in Brevard, Aspen, and Salzburg.

**Daniel Daughtry-Weiss**, Baroque 'cello, earned the Master of Music degree in historical performance/baroque cello from Oberlin Conservatory. Prior to moving to Washington, Daniel performed for several years as a member of Consort Courante in Vermont. In addition to numerous appearances as a continuo/bass player, he has appeared as a soloist in Rochester, NY with Publick Musick, and locally with Sarabande. Daniel has honed his baroque cello skills under Catharina Meints (Cleveland Orchestra, Oberlin Conservatory), Phoebe Carrai (faculty, Berlin Hochschule and Longy School of Music, formerly of Musica Antiqua Koln), Kenneth Slowick (artistic director, Baroque Performance Institute, Smithsonian Chamber Players), Brent Wissick (University of North Carolina), and Anner Bylisma.

Soprano **Jeanne Fischer** appears as a soloist with a variety of chamber groups, including the Smithsonian Chamber Players, the Washington Bach Consort, the Dryden Ensemble, and Modern Musick. Having completed a Master's Degree at London's Royal Academy of Music, her British performances include modern-day premieres of recently discovered Handel cantatas with the London-based Brook Street Band, as well as a candlelit concert at St. Martin-in-the-Fields as part of the Outstanding Young Artists' Series. Ms. Fischer also appears as a baroque dancer, most recently with Pittsburgh's Chatham Baroque, and the Rochester-based Publick Musick. She is currently a DMA candidate at the University of Maryland, where her recent performances have included Nora in Vaughan-Williams' *Riders to the Sea*, Eurilla in Vivaldi's *Eurilla e Alcindo*, and the soprano solos in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*.

**Michelle Roy**, harpsichord, is a specialist in performing keyboard and chamberworks from the Baroque era. Locally, Ms. Roy has appeared with the ensemble Sarabande, the Bach Sinfonia, the Mount Vernon Community Orchestra, and the Washington Monteverdi Singers. She was a member of the Pittsburgh Early Music Ensemble (since renamed Chatham Baroque), and also works with the ensemble Textrix, dedicated to vocal chamber music of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. She has also appeared with members of the King's Noyse violin band and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Ms. Roy received her Master's degree from the Early Music Institute at Indiana University where she studied harpsichord and continuo with Elizabeth Wright. She has also studied with Peter Sykes of Boston.

**Sarah Weiner**, Baroque oboe and oboe d'amore, is an active performer on both modern and historical instruments. She has performed with various ensembles around the country including: The Bach Sinfonia, The Bach Ensemble, Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, Baltimore Pro Musica Rara, Philadelphia Classical Symphony, Baltimore Handel Choir, and Londontowne Symphony. She is a founding member of Sarabande, a trio of three Baroque oboists (all named Sarah) who perform 18th-century chamber music for double-reed instruments, and a former member of the cross-over group Ensemble Galilei, which combines early performance practice with Celtic folk music traditions. This past summer Sarah played in l'Orchestra Classica di Santa Croce in Batignano, Italy. Originally from the Pacific Northwest, Sarah completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Washington, and later migrated to the Midwest where she completed her Master of Music in Historical Performance at the Oberlin Conservatory. She continued her graduate studies at the Early Music Institute at Indiana University where she was a winner in the 1996 Early Music Institute concerto competition. Sarah has recorded for Telarc, Dorian, and Maggie's Music.

**Jay White**, countertenor, a two-time Grammy-award winning recording artist, has enjoyed a variety of performing experiences ranging from the works of Bach, Handel, and Haydn to the works of Bernstein, Britten, and Vaughan Williams. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Bach Sinfonia, Orchestra of the 17<sup>th</sup>-Century, Armonia Nova, Santa Fe Pro Musica and members of the Smithsonian Players, Tafelmusik, and the Seattle and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestras. Sought after as an interpreter of medieval, renaissance and baroque repertoire, he has appeared at the Berkeley, Bloomington and Washington, DC early music festivals. Trained by countertenors Drew Minter and Michael Chance, tenor Paul Elliott, and soprano Linda Mabbs, Mr. White has been hailed by the press as "most impressive", "displaying beauty and flexibility", and "a voice with a full measure of passion." After singing eight seasons with the internationally acclaimed ensemble, Chanticleer, where he traveled to over 40 states and 15 foreign countries, Mr. White returned to the Washington, DC area to pursue a solo and teaching career and to earn his Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Maryland. Mr. White's discography includes Chanticleer's GRAMMY® Award-winning recordings, *Colors of Love* and *Tavener: Lamentations & Praises*, and recordings on the Angel/EMI, Focus, New Albion, and Teldec labels. He has also been heard on National Public Radio and Public Radio International programs as well as radio broadcasts in eight foreign countries. You can contact Jay at his website <[www.jgwhite.net](http://www.jgwhite.net)>.

*Abraham:*

My Lord, to Thee is mine intent  
Ever to be obedient.  
That son that Thou to me hast sent  
Offer I will to Thee.  
Thy bidding done shall be.

*(Here Abraham, turning him to his son Isaac, saith:)*

Make thee ready, my dear darling,  
For we must do a little thing.  
This woode do on thy back it bring  
We may no longer abide.  
A sword and fire that I will take,  
For sacrifice behoves me to make;  
God's bidding will I not forsake,  
But ever obedient be.

*(Here Isaac speaketh to his father, and taketh a bundle of sticks and beareth after his father, and saith:)*

*Isaac:*

Father, I am all ready  
To do your bidding most meekely,  
And to bear this wood full bayn am I,  
As you commanded me.

*(Here they both go to the place to do sacrifice)*

*Abraham:*

Now, Isaac son, go we our way  
To yonder mount if that we may.

*Isaac:*

My dear father, I will essay  
To follow you full fain.

*(Abraham being minded to slay his son Isaac, lifts up his hands, and saith the following:)*

*Abraham:*

O! My heart will break in three,  
To hear thy words I have pitye;  
As Thou wilt, Lord, so must it be,  
To Thee I will be bayn.  
Lay down thy faggot, my own son dear.

*Isaac:*

All ready, father, lo it is here.  
But why make you such heavy cheer?  
Are you anything adread?

*Abraham:*

Ah! Dear God! That me is woe!

*Isaac:*

Father, if it be your will,  
Where is the beast that we shall kill?

*Abraham:*

Thereof, son, is none upon this hill.

*Isaac:*

Father, I am full sore affeared  
To see you bear that drawne sword.

*Isaac:*

Alas! Father, is that your will,  
Your owne child for to spill  
Upon this hilles brink?  
If I have trespassed in any degree  
With a yard you may beat me;  
Put up your sword, if your will be,  
For I am but a child.  
Would God my mother were here with  
me!  
She would kneel down upon her knee,  
Praying you, father, if it may be,  
For to save my life.

*Abraham:*

O Isaac, son, to thee I say  
God hath commanded me today  
Sacrifice, this is no nay,  
To make of thy bodye.

*Isaac:*

Is it God's will I shall be slain?

*Abraham:*

Yea, son, it is not for to layn.

*(Here Isaac asketh his father's blessing on his knees, and saith:)*

*Isaac:*

Father, seeing you muste needs do so,  
Let it pass lightly and over go;  
Kneeling on my knees two,  
Your blessing on me spread.

*Abraham:*

My blessing, dear son, give I thee  
And thy mother's with heart free.  
The blessing of the Trinity,  
My dear Son, on thee light.

*(Here Isaac riseth and cometh to his father, and he taketh him, and bindeth and layeth him upon the altar to sacrifice him, and saith:)*

Come hither, my child, thou art so sweet,  
Thou must be bound both hands and feet.

*Isaac:*

Father, do with me as you will,  
I must obey, and that is skill,  
Godës commandment to fulfil,  
For needs so it must be.

*Abraham:*

Isaac, Isaac, blessed must thou be.

*Isaac:*

Father, greet well my brethren ying,  
And pray my mother of her blessing,  
I come no more under her wing,  
Farewell for ever and aye.

*Abraham:*

Farewell, my sweete son of grace!

*Isaac:*

Ah, mercy, father, why tarry you so?

*Abraham:*

Jesu! On me have pity,  
That I have most in mind.

*Isaac:*

Now, father, I see that I shall die:  
Almighty God in majesty!  
My soul I offer unto Thee!

*Abraham:*

To do this deed I am sorrye.

*(Here let Abraham make a sign as tho' he would cut off his son Isaac's head with his sword; then...)*

*God speaks:*

Abraham, my servant dear,  
Lay not thy sword in no manner  
On Isaac, thy dear darling.  
For thou darest me, well wot I,  
That of thy son has no mercy,  
To fulfil my bidding.

*Abraham:*

Ah, Lord of heaven and King of bliss,  
Thy bidding shall be done, i-wiss!  
A horned wether here I see,  
Among the briars tied is he,  
To Thee offered shall he be  
Anon right in this place.

*(Then let Abraham take the lamb and kill him.)*

Sacrifice here sent me is,  
And all, Lord, through Thy grace.

*envoi:*

Such obedience grant us, O Lord!  
Ever to Thy most holy word.  
That in the same we may accord  
At this Abraham was bayn;  
And then altogether shall we  
That worthy King in heaven see,  
And dwell with Him in great glorye  
For ever and ever. Amen.

**Duetto: Giovanni Bononcini**

**Luci barbare spietate** accendete vi d'amore cosi voi mi temperate la cagion del mio dolore.

**Recitative:**

Tirsi - Così Dorinda mia, Dorinda bella il tuo Tirsi fedel teco favella.

Dorinda - Tirsi gentil la tua Dorinda io sono. Così d'amor ragiono e a chi cerca pietade io cerco fede.  
Se me sarai fedele lasciati lusingar dalla speranza.

Tirsi - Per te sarò se non me sei crudele tutto amor tuo se' tutto costanza.

**Duetto:**

Spero che in pace  
vivran quest'alme senz'altra pena.  
La doglia tace ora ch'amore la rasserena.

**Duet:**

Eyes root mercilessly to ignite you to love and so you harden me and cause me suffering.

**Recit:**

Tirsi - So, Dorinda, my beautiful Dorinda, speak to your faithful Tirsi.

Dorinda - Gentle Tirsi, I am your Dorinda. Therefore, by reason of love, I search for pity and faithfulness. I will forsake faithfulness in order to deceive hope.

Tirsi - To you, I will be, if you are not cruel to me, all loving, all faithful, and steadfast.

**Duet:**

Hope that in peace these souls will live without more suffering.  
Pain is silence and love's hour calms it.

Translation by Jay White

## Recommendations

### Website

A very good website to begin any research into the countertenor voice can be found at:

<http://www.radix.net/~dalila/singers/counter.html>

There are interviews collected with the major countertenors of today and links to several other pages full of information.

### Countertenors to Listen To

The primary countertenors I tend to listen to for proper vocal production and style:

### **Michael Chance, Andreas Scholl, Bejun Mehta, Gerard Lesne & David Daniels**

I tend to lead my students to recordings of countertenors produced after 1995. By this time, American countertenors had begun to solidify their own identities and the English countertenors had released some of their vocal heritage. In other words, the voices of countertenors became individualistic rather than carbon copies of their predecessors.

### **Tonight's Recorded Examples**

1. Cornysh, W., "Ave Maria, Mater Dei," on *Chanticleer: Magnificat*. Chanticleer and d. Joseph Jennings. Teldec: Nicasio, CA 8573-81829-2, 2000. Compact Disc.
2. Palestrina, G.P.d., "Ave Regina Caelorum," on *Chanticleer: Magnificat*. Chanticleer and d. Joseph Jennings. Teldec: Nicasio, CA 8573-81829-2, 2000. Compact Disc.
3. Victoria, T.L.d., "Regina caeli laetare," on *Chanticleer: Magnificat*. Chanticleer and d. Joseph Jennings. Teldec: Nicasio, CA 8573-81829-2, 2000. Compact Disc.
4. Richafort, J., "De mon triste desplaisir," recorded live, ct. Jay White Clarice Smith Center, Gildehorn Recital Hall, May, 2004.
5. Dowland, J., "Flow, my tears," on *English Folksongs & Lute Songs (17<sup>th</sup> Century)*, ct. Andreas Scholl and lute Andreas Martin, Harmonia Mundi: Arles HMC 901603, 1996.
6. Purcell, H., "Their looks are such" from *Indian Queen*, recorded live, ct. Jay White, Bach Sinfonia, d. Daniel Abraham Washington Conservatory of Music, October, 2003.
7. Mozart, A., "K. 255, Rondeau et aria: Ombra felice" on *Sento Amor: Operatic Arias*, ct. David Daniels, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, d. Harry Bicket, EMI: New York 7243 5 45365 2 6, 1999.
8. Purcell, H., "Jubilate Deo" on *Te Deum & Jubilate Deo*, ct. Alfred Deller, Deller Consort, d. A. Deller, Harmonia Mundi: 190207, 1968.

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- Miller, R. "Countertenoring" (2000). *NATS Journal of Singing* 6: 19-21.
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- The Countertenor Pages*. (2005). Retrieved January 5, 2005, from <http://www.countertenor.demon.co.uk/ct/ctindex.html>
- Mercedes, K. (2005). *Male Altos (and Sopranos)*. Retrieved January 5, 2005, from <http://www.radix.net/~dalila/singers/counter.html>