

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: OLD MUSIC FOR A NEW WORLD:
PERFORMING STANDARD REPERTOIRE
WITH CONTEMPORARY SENSIBILITIES

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Arts in Opera Performance, 2023

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Society and current events shape the art of their time. Many works of operatic and song literature that are considered masterpieces have elements that are challenging to modern audiences—be it their composer’s personal beliefs, embedded racism and sexism, or other unfavorable aspects. How to deal with these controversial elements of standard repertoire is not wholly agreed upon and the divide on how to engage with them is often generational. Those of an older generation often espouse the inherent value of these works, whereas those of a younger generation struggle to see beyond their faults. This does not have to divide the classical world of singing—with sincere and careful thought, discussion, and research it is possible to engage with works that have a checkered past and to continue to grow the canon and our understanding of it. Supplementing materials accompanying this dissertation project including video recordings of each performance event.

OLD MUSIC FOR A NEW WORLD:
PERFORMING STANDARD REPERTOIRE WITH CONTEMPORARY SENSIBILITIES

by

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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 in
Opera Performance
2023

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Dedication

To my little bug, Matilda—I love singing with you every day.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support of so many people. I have to thank my teacher Professor Jennifer Casey Cabot—I am so lucky to have such a thoughtful and talented singer as a mentor. I would also like to thank Dr. Mai-Linh Pham for allowing me to stream-of-consciousness work through what this project would be for the first 20 minutes of every coaching and keeping me to such a high standard in my interpretation of this repertoire; Maestro Craig Kier for helping me keep the momentum going, despite my every attempt to slow down; Professor Delores Ziegler and Dr. Laura Rosenthal for your critical engagement with my work; all of my MOS colleagues for making my time on the stage so enjoyable and inspiring me to think more deeply about the characters we get to embody; Keyoni Glover for taking such incredible care of Matilda when I needed to be on campus—I could focus so much better knowing she was not just happy but thriving in her time away from me; finally, thank you to Henry Druschel for being my constant cheerleader, sounding board, and partner—without you I know I wouldn't be graduating less than nine months (!) since our daughter was born.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The world of opera is finally reckoning with the complicated history of the Western world and the inequities that led to the success and dominance of what is considered the "canon" of classical music. With this new level of engagement comes the complicated issue of how to interact with standard repertoire. Works that are considered part of the canon have endured because their music is still engaging—something that was written 250 years ago can be just as compelling when performed today as it was at its conception. These works are worth preserving, teaching, and performing, but they are not without their faults. The people behind some masterpieces had significant moral flaws, and many of these works contain sexist and/or racist characters and themes. Thoughts on how we should engage with this multifaceted picture of the canon vary. Some wish to continue performing the great works as they always have been performed, relying on their status as masterpieces of the canon. Others wish to draw attention to what they consider “problematic” aspects of those works, sometimes even going so far as to call for their retirement from the canon. This divide is often generational, but it is not impassable. We all love this artform and music and I believe with open dialogue and respectful engagement we can bridge this gap.

In my time at the University of Maryland, I have experienced these issues firsthand, but through my research and writing of program notes I have been able to contextualize and fully appreciate works I might otherwise have written off. As a member of the Maryland Opera Studio, I have had the opportunity to perform a vast array of incredible repertoire, some that were assigned to me and some that I chose. Some of this repertoire challenged me not just for its technical demands, but with its content. I took issue with the source material of some of these

works because the values they espoused did not align with my own or those of modern society. But through my own reading and discussion with my directors, coaches, and colleagues, I found insight and value in works that I struggled to engage with at first. I saw how I, and my colleagues, were able to engage with works that were hundreds of years old as if they were written just yesterday. I believe that works that have complicated origins can be effectively understood and even provide commentary on our modern world with thoughtful programming and contextualization.

Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* has themes of misogyny and racism deeply embedded in its libretto, but the message of enlightenment and knowledge being a bastion against chaos and destruction still rings true today. These two facets of the opera, while in opposition to each other, coexist in the work and a deeper understanding of Mozart's world makes resolving this dissonance possible. *Don Giovanni* deals with sexual assault and at times, the libretto and music can seem to make light of it, turning Giovanni's conquests into punchlines. However, the women in Mozart's *Giovanni* have the last word and, if staged thoughtfully, rise above the base humor of the libretto. Both of these operas have glorious scores and it is worth grappling with their issues in order to bring that music to modern audiences.

For my final performance project, I programmed Richard Wagner's *Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme*, a selection of Richard Strauss's *Opus 10, Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod* by Charles T. Griffes, and *On this Island* by Benjamin Britten. What all of these works have in common is that they are complex, engaging, and beautiful pieces of music—just as their composers and poets were multifaceted human beings. While not all four of these composers are of equal status in the canon, all of these works are considered standard repertoire and widely known and well regarded.

I hope to bring light to new aspects of these works and their origins with comprehensive program notes and a thoughtful and authentic performance. Eventually I hope to create a public database with the sources I have accumulated in my research to make contextualizing these works easier for singers and students. Knowledge should be shared, rather than held in institutions of higher learning so that our artform can continue to grow and evolve while holding on to the best of its past.

Chapter 2: Solo DMA Recital Program Notes

What makes repertoire part of the canon? The overarching theme of my final performance project is an exploration of different styles and genres that suit me as both a singer and performer. Essentially, these are works that I have had on my radar for years and I was excited to fully immerse myself in. All are considered representative of the tenants of standard repertoire, which gave me pause at first. I am passionate about programming lesser known works from the past and present. How could I program a recital with only the works of old white men? The composers in this recital range from wholesome and gone too soon, to (from all accounts) reprehensible as a person. Can one really divorce an artist from their art? It is impossible to look to the past without our modern perspective.

Art is not only its conception, but its life after. Music is a living and breathing artform. The crux of my final performance project is that music only fractionally belongs to its composer: while on the page it lies dormant, it is only when performers pick it up that it lives and breathes. With this in mind, it is completely possible to engage with works and composers that have a problematic history as long as we fully understand and engage with it. With all that in mind these are my selections for my solo recital.

Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod (1918), Charles T. Griffes

Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod, while art songs, have the breadth and depth of opera arias. These songs offer a glimpse into the intense and emotional world dreamed up by poet William Sharp when he was writing as his alternate persona Fiona MacLeod. As a singer these are incredibly satisfying songs to sing—while technically difficult, once learned the vocal lines sing with a natural ease. They have earned a spot in the standard repertoire in recent years as

American singers look to program more American art song. Additionally, recordings by Barbara Bonney have bolstered their profile as well.

Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920) is an incredibly prolific American composer whose name many singers do not know. Most famous for his orchestral works, he has a catalog of complex and exciting art songs yet to be discovered by many. Born in Elmira, NY, he began piano lessons at a young age alongside his sister. His piano teacher, Mary Selena Broughton, saw his potential and encouraged him to continue his studies in Berlin, going so far as to financially support him in the move.¹ He moved to Berlin to study in 1904. While in Germany Griffes became interested in composition, eventually completely shifting focus away from his piano performance career. He took a handful of lessons with Engelbert Humperdinck and studied further with Philippe Rüfer.² Griffes returned to the US in 1907 and took a position as music director at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY—a role he held until his death in 1920.

Griffes was greatly influenced by German Romanticism—his earliest songs use German texts and are generally harmonically consonant, with greatest emphasis on text and melody. However, as the years went on he moved away from his romantic education and began to introduce more complex harmonies and dissonance to his writing—he became influenced by Impressionism and Eastern music.³ Griffes's *Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod* (1918) give a glimpse of the song composer he might have become had he lived longer. In these songs he explores complex harmonies and rhythms, setting the scene with a mix of sweeping lines and dense textures in the accompaniment. These songs were certainly conceived orchestrally, which can be felt in the sheer breadth of the piano line. The texts of these songs were published under

¹ Anderson, Donna K., “Griffes, Charles T(omlinson),” Grove Music Online.

² *Ibid.*

³ Anderson, Donna K., *Charles T. Griffes: A life in music*, 136.

the name Fiona MacLeod, a pen name of Scottish writer William Sharp (1855-1905). Fiona MacLeod was a persona Sharp devised at first to publish a romance novel, but he went on to publish poems under the same name. He was dedicated to convincing publishers of her reality—he went so far as to compose a decade’s worth of correspondences in character to uphold the fiction of her existence.⁴ Sharp claimed he wrote in the voice of MacLeod when “under the influence of a kind of mesmeric or spirited trance.”⁵ The spiritual and mythical nature of these texts lends itself to Griffes’s atmospheric writing.

The first song, “The Lament of Ian the Proud,” opens with a plaintive motivic gesture in the right hand of the piano ushering the listener into the world of these songs. When the voice enters it is in answer to the call of the introduction and the story unfolds—the speaker is an old man mourning the loss of love. The piano line carries the forward energy of the song, while the vocal line often sounds almost as if it is trying to hold on to a framework that is not there, just as the old man is trying to grasp at something he has lost. The second song, “Thy Dark Eyes to Mine,” opens with a repetitive gesture in the piano of three against two, giving a sense of displacement. The voice eventually joins in, further complicating the texture. The speaker sings of being lost in the eyes and soul of a lover and as listeners tonally it is hard to say where we are, we are just as love drunk as the speaker. The final song, “The Rose of the Night,” is perhaps the most dissonant of the three and tells of the (fictional) lore when a soul of the living falls in love with a soul of the dead. These songs are challenging and rewarding for both the performers and listeners. While they are not obvious in their tonality, there is something innate about these melodies, clearly inspired by folk music.

⁴ Halloran, William F., ed, “The William Sharp ‘Fiona Macleod’ Archive.”

⁵ Anderson, Donna K, *Charles T. Griffes: A life in music*, 206.

On this Island, Op. 11 (1937), Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten is a titan in the vocal canon, largely regarded as having single handedly given new life to English opera in the 20th century. His music is celebrated by musicologists and performers alike. He is an efficient composer, able to evoke any mood or style and his text setting, while it looks rhythmic and daunting on the page, is naturalistic and a joy to sing. These songs are notable works in his oeuvre because they are his first published cycle of songs written for voice and piano—a medium in which he went on to write prolifically.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) is one of the most famous composers of the 20th Century. He was a composer, conductor, and pianist who revived English opera for the modern era and worked towards arts and music accessibility in the UK, especially in the realm of music for children.⁶ Born in Lowestoft, England, Britten began his music education as a child with encouragement from his mother, who was a singer and pianist herself. He studied both piano and viola, and before the age of 14 had written 100 compositions (some have been published posthumously). He went on to study at the Royal College of Music in 1930 and began work professionally when hired to write music for documentary films (where he would meet W.H. Auden, the poet of the text from *On this Island*). Britten went on to become hugely a successful and prolific composer. He had a number of fruitful collaborators throughout his life, most notable being the tenor Peter Pears, who was also his life partner. Today we understand Britten as a gay man, and while he did live openly with Pears and themes of homosexuality pervade his work, he was not outspoken in his identity as such. In much of Britten's work we also find a fascination with boys and boyhood, to a somewhat discomfiting degree. This fascination plays

⁶ Brett, Philip, Heather Wiebe, Jennifer Doctor, Judith LeGrove, and Paul Banks., "Britten, (Edward) Benjamin," *Grove Music Online*.

out most clearly in his final opera *Death in Venice* (1973) which tells the story of an older man infatuated with a youth.

On this Island, Op. 11 (1937) is Britten's first published song cycle with piano. The texts are selected poems from W.H. Auden's collection *Look, Stranger* (1936) (which was later published in the US under the title, *On this Island*). Two of the poems in this collection were dedicated to Britten, so they were an obvious choice for him to set to music. Britten and Auden met in 1935 when they were hired by the General Post Office Film Unit to write music and text, respectively, for a documentary. This initial partnership led to a number of collaborative years between the two, resulting in other documentary films, songs, and an opera, *Paul Bunyan* (1941). Eventually, their friendship and collaboration waned, especially in the years after WWII. Auden had staunchly radical ideals concerning war that Britten shared, but was more inclined to express through symbolism in his music, rather than taking a staunch stand. They also had their sexuality in common and Auden's influence was said to have made the younger Britten more comfortable with his own.⁷

While the texts of these songs are all from the same collection of poems, there is no clear throughline across the cycle. They are their own discreet universes, that instead share a similarly ironic and dry humor. The overarching theme across the songs is the passage of time and its effects on us—both physical and emotional. Britten did choose the poems and ordered them, which inclines one to consider this a song cycle, rather than merely a collection of songs published together.

The first song, "Let the florid music praise!," begins with a triumphant cry celebrating the beauty of the subject of the song, yet it reminds us that none can escape the passage of time and

⁷ Britten and W. H. Auden: *from Paul Bunyan to Hymn to St Cecilia*, English National Opera.

the eventual loss of physical beauty. Britten illustrates this juxtaposition with a very clear break in the style of the music he has written. The first half is all major and has a bright almost brassy quality, whereas the second half, starting with “Oh, but the unloved...” brings to mind Purcell, and a lament. It is the lament that wins out in the end.

The second song, “Now the leaves are falling fast,” opens with four slow, dissonant chords, which are then swept into a *piu mosso* and chordal structure that persists throughout the piece until the very last section. There is a sense of unease that pervades the text, the speaker is overwhelmed by signs of time flying by, until finally the tension breaks and a sense of suspended calm is found on the lines, “Cold, impossible, ahead...” Only the individual can decide whether the final tone of the song is one of acceptance or resignation.

The third song, “Seascape,” gives us the title of the cycle in its first words. This is the most content song of the set—all of the other songs have a sense of discomfort running through them, but “Seascape” is happy to bask in a sunny day at the seaside. However, there is still a current running through it—the piano moves in a wave-like gesture, spurring the momentum of the song forward even as it ebbs and flows. The vocal line weaves over the piano line, like a bird over the surf. “Seascape” is placed in the middle of the cycle and gives some respite from the complex nature of time, in contrast to the other songs. A single perfect moment is described in this song and Britten’s music has a fleeting quality to it, just like a moment in time.

The fourth song, “Nocturne,” as its name implies, is inspired by night. The piano plays a steady dirge of minor chords throughout the piece, only introducing some movement into the right hand in four measures towards the end. This evokes the stillness of the night, while the text speaks of night descending with a quiet remove. The vocal line rises and falls in long waves, perhaps in illustration of sleep slowly overtaking the person. Sleep and night do not come easily

or in one fell swoop, this is the netherworld between waking and dreaming. Britten brings this inbetween world to life with close, sometimes dissonant harmonies that the voice eventually breaks through at the top of its line, then sinks back into. Time in this song is at a standstill, as it seems to be when we sleep.

The final song, “As it is, plenty,” ends the cycle on a satirical note. The text speaks of a man who should be happy, he has happy children, a car, a devoted wife, and yet... Britten’s musical setting feels jaunty, but with crunching dissonances it reveals that something is amiss. The song is in three sections, the first states why the man should be happy, he has everything; the second speaks of the past “When nothing was enough, But love...and the rough future...” and the man having been betrayed by a lover; the final section implores the man to be happy for what he has and not to see the past loss “as major.”

Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme (1862), Richard Wagner

These songs are remarkable in that they are firmly Wagnerian compositions—sweeping melodic lines and intricate harmonic textures, but they are lieder. These stand out as some of the only works with which a young singer can cut their teeth on Wagner.

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) is one of the most influential figures in Western classical music. Born in Leipzig to a middle class family, Wagner’s origin story is somewhat muddled, due in part to his own autobiographical writings, which allowed him to craft his persona as an “untutored genius” in music.⁸ By all accounts, his own and others, Wagner was highly egotistical, obsessive, and aggressive.⁹ Today he is often associated with Nazis, due to Hitler’s

⁸ Millington, Barry, John Deathridge, Carl Dahlhaus and Robert Bailey, “Wagner, (Wilhelm) Richard,” *Grove Music Online*.

⁹ Thompson, Patricia Kay, “A Stylistic Analysis of Richard Wagner’s Wesendonck Songs,” 5.

reverence of his music. While he died well before the Nazi era, he was a known antisemite and wrote the article “*Das Judenthum in der Musik*” (“Jewishness in Music”) in 1850. A particularly illustrative quote from this is: “Jewish musicians are only capable of producing music that is shallow and artificial because they have no connection with the genuine spirit of the German people.”¹⁰ He clearly held abhorrent views of the world and yet he also was dedicated to creating beauty and truth in his art. He sought to create a true *Gesamtkunstwerk*—complete work of art, melding music, drama, and stagecraft. Many would consider his search for this complete work of art a success in works such as *Tristan und Isolde* (1865) and *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1869-1876), both of which contain moments of unsurpassed beauty both in music and drama. How could someone with such hateful beliefs create such transcendent art? This is the crux of the Wagner issue and, I believe, the issue with a great deal of our operatic and song literature canon. I think we must fully engage with the complicated history of these works for them to maintain any cultural relevance today. There is no question that the music and words are beautiful, but what brought them into the world and what meaning can we imbue them with today?

Wagner dedicated the wealth of his creative output towards his operas and wrote very few lieder. His *Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme* (“Five Poems for Female Voice”) (1862), known widely as the *Wesendonck Lieder*, are considered masterpieces of the genre. The texts of these songs were written by Mathilde Wesendonck, Wagner’s intimate confidant and the wife of one of his benefactors. Whether the two had a full-fledged affair is unknown, but they certainly wrote many passionate letters to each other, about each other, and this work of intense feeling was the result of their relationship. The two met in 1852 at a performance of *Tannhäuser* (1845),

¹⁰ Biran, Jane. “The Wagner Syndrome.”

where Mathilde's husband Otto Wesendonck first became a financial supporter of Wagner.¹¹ Wagner was quickly infatuated with the beautiful Mathilde, writing to many friends of his interest in her.¹² They ran in the same circles for a number of years, until in 1857 Wesendonck convinced her husband to invite Wagner and his wife to move into the guest house on their summer estate in Zurich. It was during this tenancy that Wagner was working on *Tristan und Isolde* and wrote these songs. Although their personal relationship and Wagner's marriage would eventually sour during this time, both Wagner and Wesendonck were inspired by their intimacy to write some of their greatest works, respectively. Wesendonck would go on to have a number of prolific years of writing after her affair with Wagner, so it seems she drew as much from their relationship as he.¹³ Writing about their creative relationship she said, "his enthusiasm fired my own," and they fed off of each other creatively—Wagner took her creative pursuits seriously, rather than just as the hobby of a wealthy woman.¹⁴

The result of their relationship and creative partnership is distilled within *Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme*. While in residence at the Wesendonck estate, Wagner was working on the *Tristan und Isolde* prose and becoming obsessed with the idea of the renunciation of self and ultimate love. This theme of an all consuming love that *Tristan* is known for runs through these lieder as well. These songs are intense, introspective, and personal, mirroring the *verboten* relationship between Wesendonck and Wagner. This is a collection of songs, rather than a song cycle—Wagner did not write them in the order they were published and they can be pulled out to stand alone.¹⁵ These are also soundly lieder and were composed with voice and piano in mind, as

¹¹ Miller, Malcolm Bernard Bela, *Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder: An analytical study*, 14.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴ Spencer, Stewart, *Wagner Remembered*, 103.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

Wagner only orchestrated “Träume” himself. Still, Wagner wrote for the voice with orchestra the vast majority of the time, so the vocal line must be treated with the same breadth and support of any Wagner vocal writing.

The first song, “*Der Engel*,” (“The Angel”) was written November 30, 1857.

Wesendonck gave Wagner this poem two months after he had given her an emotional first reading of the prose of *Tristan*.¹⁶ The primary theme of this poem is longing for salvation and a peaceful release of the spirit from its earthly vessel. This ascension of the spirit is reminiscent of the “Liebestod” from *Tristan* and the idea of peacefully moving into death, but Wesendonck’s spirit is searching for this release alone as opposed to in the embrace of a lover. Wagner begins the song with arpeggiated G major chords, marked “*sehr zart und weich*” (“very tender and soft”) for the piano. The voice enters gently after a short introduction, with a long almost suspended line. The opening stanza is gentle and reverent, talking about the angels heard of in childhood. When the poem turns to the pains and trouble that can come in life, the accompaniment becomes more urgent, with relentlessly shifting minor chords that push the energy forward. Finally there is a release on “*da der Engel nieder schwebt*” (“there the angel floats down”), and the stretch and suspended quality returns to both the piano and vocal lines. On this line there is also text painting, as the voice descends gently just as the angel does on the person longing for salvation. Finally in the postlude the piano illustrates the soul ascending to heaven, lifting off with the highest note being a G6.

The second song, “*Stehe still!*” (“Stand still”), was actually composed fourth of the five songs, in February 1857.¹⁷ The speaker in this song is begging time and the universe to stand still

¹⁶ Miller, 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

only for a moment. It is finally in the eyes of a lover that one glimpses eternity and understands the mystery of life. This text seems directly inspired by Wesendonck and Wagner's relationship. Wagner opens the song in C minor, with an ascending sequence in the right hand that gives a sense of unease and irresolution. The voice enters after two measures almost leaping into the fray, just as the speaker feels caught in the wheel of time. There are only catch breaths of eighth and sixteenth note rests for the singer, until finally there is a full measure of rest before "*Halte an dich*" ("hold on to you"), when the speaker finally asks the wheel of time to stop. However, the rhythmic and harmonic meter presses on, sweeping the voice along with it. There is a stark shift in the piano and vocal line on "*dass in selig süßem Vergessen*" ("that in blessed sweet oblivion"), because the speaker has alighted on something that will stop the wheel of time—the eyes of a lover and drinking the soul of another in. From this point on the song becomes stretched and languishing, just as the speaker has found a sense of the eternal in the union of souls with another.

The third song, "*Im Treibhaus*" ("In the greenhouse") was written last of all the songs, between April 30 and May 1, 1858.¹⁸ The rest of these songs were written within a month or two of each other at most, but there was a longer gap before this final song because Wagner's wife, Minna, had intercepted one of his notes to Wesendonck.¹⁹ Wagner left for Venice for a few months to allow tempers to cool, leaving Wesendonck in a morose mood, if one is to take this poem at face value. The speaker is in a greenhouse gazing up at the boughs around them, but they are only reminded of their mortality. There is a quiet solitude in both the text and Wagner's setting. Wagner denoted this piece as a study for *Tristan*. The motive in the right hand at the

¹⁸ Miller, 18.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 19.

opening of the song returns throughout and can be directly connected to the “Pain of Death” and “Desolation” motives in *Tristan*.²⁰ This song stays in an ambiguous place tonally, mirroring the intransigent state of life.

The fourth song, “*Schmerzen*,” (“Agonies”), was written third in December 1857.²¹ The speaker feels anguish that the sun must set every day, but takes heart that it rises triumphantly again each morning—this is the ultimate symbol of the circle of life and rebirth. The speaker asks how they can despair when nature gives them such hope for salvation. This piece is only two pages long, but is the most percussive and triumphant of the entire set of songs. Wagner treats the short poem with utter seriousness, opening with a despairing, descending line in the piano and giving way to the voice repeating the gesture. On the line “*doch erstehst in alter Pracht*” (“you arise old glory”), the vocal line rises with the sun. The piece ends with a postlude cadencing in C major, triumphant nature.

The final song, “*Träume*,” (“Dreams”), was the second piece written chronologically, on December 4 and 5, 1857. Wagner wrote the bulk of the song on December 4, but the next day he added the 16 bars of introduction.²² This song is also denoted as a study for *Tristan*—a number of motives from the opera are referenced, the clearest being the “Evocation of the Night” motive in the first six measures.²³ The text is about the all engrossing dreamlike state infatuation and love brings on. The speaker questions how their dreams have not dissipated in the day, they only sink into the grave when on the breast of the lover. Wagner sets the opening stanza in long arching phrases, sustaining them as the dreams have been sustained. The three inner stanzas surge forward with some urgency, coming to a moment of reprieve only on the word “*träume*”

²⁰ Baldwin, Heather J, *Richard Wagner's “Wesendonck Lieder,”* 28.

²¹ Miller, 18.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Baldwin, 18.

("dreams"). The final stanza returns to the spacious setting of the text, stretched to its furthest limits as the dreams finally fade away. Wagner orchestrated this song for orchestra and violin for Wesendonck's 29th birthday and arranged for her to wake up to a live performance of it.²⁴

While Wagner's public persona and beliefs were abhorrent, he shows us a softness in his music that reminds us of the complexity of people. To perform his work you have to be able to sit with the dissonance of the man and his music.

Selections from *Acht Gedichte*, Op. 10 (1887), Richard Strauss

The work of Richard Strauss is inescapable for a singer—whether lieder or opera, Strauss has a huge body of vocal literature with something for all voice types. He had an innate understanding of the human voice and wrote vocal lines that are not only beautiful, but particularly enjoyable to sing. Op. 10 is early in Strauss's catalog, but two of his greatest masterpieces are included within it, as well as a number of surprising gems.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) was a German conductor and composer. He is considered one of the greatest German composers and certainly the most influential of his time, taking up the helm of Wagner and Brahms. Born in Munich in 1864, his father was a famous horn player and conductor.²⁵ The young Strauss began piano at four, composed his first work at six, began violin at eight, and began studying composition at eleven—his musical career seemed predestined. Under his father's influence he studied classical composers like Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. After graduating the gymnasium he entered university for a year, but left to pursue his career as his compositions were premiering across Germany beyond his home city of Munich. Strauss had a lucrative career and lived through two world wars. He worked with many Jewish

²⁴ Miller, 19.

²⁵ Gilliam, Bryan, and Charles Youmans. "Strauss, Richard." *Grove Music Online*.

artists, but was also named head of the *Reichsmusikkammer* (Reich Chamber of Music) by Hitler in 1933.²⁶ He was uniquely able to make a place for himself and his work in tumultuous and dire times. His bourgeois upbringing in Munich made him comfortable moving between class strata. Strauss's first thought was always of music and he attempted to keep himself out of politics. This is a stance that is difficult to accept considering he lived through and was active in the Nazi regime, though he never became a member of the Nazi party. I believe Strauss was certainly naive to believe he could participate in Hitler's agenda without fully endorsing it. However, one must also understand that he was a proud German whose life and family were in Germany. Additionally, his daughter-in-law was Jewish and by agreeing to work for the party he was able to save her life and her family.²⁷ The picture that emerges is of a complicated man who loved his family and music above all else.

While Strauss's greatest passion for vocal writing was opera, his lieder spanned the breadth of his career. His first composition at age six was a lied and his last compositions were lieder, with one in progress at his passing.²⁸ The *Acht Gedichte aus "Letzte Blätter" von Hermann von Gilm*, Op. 10 were written in 1885 and published in 1887. These are considered to be his first mature lieder and this compilation of eight songs contains two of his most famous songs, "*Zueignung*" and "*Allerseelen*." The text for these songs were all written by Hermann von Gilm (1812-1864). Von Gilm was an Austrian poet and lawyer, these poems are all from his *Sophienlieder* (1844).²⁹ I have selected four of these eight songs and created my own performance order.

²⁶ Gilliam.

²⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁸ Jefferson, Alan, *The Lieder of Richard Strauss*, 2.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 127.

The first song is “*Die Georgine*” (“The Dahlia”). The speaker asks the dahlia why it blooms after all the other flowers—would it not enjoy the sun of May? But they then recognize if the dahlia bloomed in May it would not be special, just as the speaker has come to love late in life. The springtime for the dahlia and the narrator is late, but it still comes with the same joys and pain. There is a piano introduction of 5 measures that eases the listener into the story, with a triplet figure scattered throughout that appears throughout the piece before a new verse. Strauss sets the three stanzas of the poem as verses with variations and it could be broken down as AA’BA’B’. The song has no postlude and ends with the voice and piano on the word “*schmerz*” (“pain”), falling on a dark note—although both the speaker and dahlia have known love, they know the pain that comes with it.

The second song is “*Die Zeitlose*” (“The meadow saffron”). This song is only one page long but shifts tonality constantly—Strauss keeps the listener (and performers) on their toes. The text is about a seemingly innocent flower, the meadow saffron. It has the look of a lily and the color of a rose, but it is poisonous. Just as this beautiful flower is deadly, so is love. Once again, the beauty and joy of love has its end result in pain.

The third song is “*Allerseelen*” (“All Souls’ Day”). The text is about the one day a year when souls of the dead can be reunited with those they love among the living. Although the song is in common time, the piano introduction has a number of syncopated rhythms in the right hand that muddy the meter. It is when the voice enters in measure 7 that the regular beat is most established. This union of the piano line and vocal line falling into step could illustrate the unification of the living and dead souls for the day. It is also in E-flat major, but with many accidentals throughout that give the overall piece a sense of longing and reaching—it only reaches a full resolution in the final measure with an E-flat major chord.

The final song, “*Zueignung*” (“Dedication”), is actually the first of the set, but the theme of thanks and gratitude is an ideal note to end on. The poem is exactly what the title denotes, a dedication, in this case to a love—this title was Strauss’s own, as von Gilm’s poem was untitled.³⁰ Even though the speaker feels ill to be apart from their love, they are thankful to experience such an intense devotion to another. Strauss sets the piece in C major, but opens with a pedal point on a B to a C, illustrating the unease the speaker feels at being apart from their loved one. The final stanza is marked *mit Weihe* (with consecration), as the speaker gives one final decree of their devotion and gratitude for their love.

³⁰ Jefferson, 24.

Chapter 3: Opera Program Notes

A work that lasts two hundred years is tough,
And operas, God knows, must stand enough...³¹

This line from W.H. Auden's "Metologue to *The Magic Flute*" (1956), written for the bicentennial of Mozart's birth, while comic, conveys a fundamental truth. The great operas in the standard repertoire have withstood the test of time for a reason. Mozart's mature operas defined the genre with his ingenious ensembles, beautiful melodies, and dramatic pacing. Until Wagner and through composed works became popular, Mozart's formula was unquestionably the norm, with variations in Italian *bel canto* and the French grand opera traditions.

In my time with the Maryland Opera Studio I had the opportunity to perform roles in two of Mozart's most famous operas: *Don Giovanni* (1787) and *Die Zauberflöte* (1791). As a performer this experience is invaluable to me. In order to prepare myself to be a complete artist in the contemporary world it is important to understand the masterworks that are performed year after year. These operas (like many others) are not without their issues, however. Both feature themes and characters that chafe for modern audiences with good reason. The casual sexism of both *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte* has been accepted for years as of its time, and the racism of the character Monostatos in *Zauberflöte* is often glossed over in modern productions. Even in our production, references to his skin color were removed from the translations—he became an evil monster unmoored from any historical context or reality. Removing the offending language from the libretto only glosses over the problem. I believe that both of these shows can be contextualized to make them not only acceptable to modern audiences, but meaningful.

³¹ Auden, W.H., "Metologue to *The Magic Flute*," 1956.

Don Giovanni (1787)

Don Giovanni is arguably Mozart's greatest work—it has incredible arias, genius ensembles, and clear and exciting dramatic pacing. It does a disservice to the opera, to view it only through the lens of its title character. It is more interesting to consider the title presented at its Vienna premiere, in 1788: *Il dissoluto punito, ossia il Don Giovanni* (*The rake punished, or Don Giovanni*)—this story does not belong to Don Giovanni. He is not in control and, if anything, this is the tale of his undoing. Masterfully conveyed by Mozart's complex characterization, contemporary audiences might fall prey to the idea that major tonalities and upbeat tempos have solely positive connotations. Giovanni's womanizing can be played off as a joke, but I do not believe that is what Mozart intended.

Don Giovanni was commissioned by Pasquale Bondini, the impresario of the Prague National Theater after *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786) had been a huge success in the city.³² The libretto was written by Lorenzo Da Ponte, who had written the libretto for *Figaro* and would go on to write the libretto for *Così fan tutte* (1790) as well. *Don Giovanni* had two premieres—the first in Prague on October 29, 1787 and the second in Vienna on May 7, 1788. These were not the same show, as arias were added and removed and an epilogue was added to the end of the opera. Da Ponte called this a *dramma giocoso* (playful drama), whereas Mozart considered it an *opera buffa* (comic opera). No matter the classification, it is clear that certain characters fall under *buffa* stock characters, while others might be considered full *opera seria* (serious opera) characters.³³ Mozart's audience would have been familiar with these stereotypes, they would understand the bumbling bass role, the young peasant girl, the young noblewoman, etc. as

³² Hunter, Mary, *Mozart's Operas*, 148.

³³ Rushton, Julian, *The New Grove Guide to Mozart and His Operas*, 94.

meaningful tropes. The Don Juan story was also familiar to his audience, a morality tale already over 150 years old by the time Da Ponte and Mozart came to it.³⁴ This is a context that contemporary audiences are often lacking.

Don Giovanni is a young nobleman who lives his life seeking out sexual conquests, without repercussions or the effect of his actions in mind. This opera contains, at the very least, talk of sexual violence (it is sometimes staged), that unless treated with the care it deserves can come off poorly. Although Giovanni is condemned to hell for his misdeeds at the end of the opera, in many modern productions until that moment he is very much in charge of the story. His actions, such as violence towards his servant Leporello, attempted rape of Donna Anna, and aggression towards every woman he meets, are played off as jokes. In his “Catalog Aria,” Leporello enumerates the breathtaking scope of Don Giovanni’s sexual conquests to Donna Elvira. What could be interpreted as Leporello’s sincere attempt to warn Elvira away from Giovanni is often played as a joke, the audience laughs with him as Elvira is confronted with the records of Giovanni’s misdeeds. The use of a suggestive hum at the end of the aria can detract from a true moment of connection between these characters, and yet it is standard performance practice. The continued performance of *Don Giovanni* in ways that were accepted in the past rings false today.

It is the women of this opera who are the true backbone of the work. They are multifaceted and flawed, but ultimately the heroes of the story. Donna Anna remains strong in her conviction that she has been supremely wronged by Giovanni, Donna Elvira maintains her faith in the possibility of redemption until the very end, and Zerlina retains her youthful joy all despite Giovanni’s wrongs against each of them.

³⁴ Brown-Montesano, Kristi, *Understanding the Women of Mozart’s Operas*, 2.

Don Giovanni remains in the top ten operas performed to this day.³⁵ It is some of Mozart's most exciting and complex writing and has endured because of the beauty of the music, but also because of the vivid characters and compelling theme. To allow the work to reach its full potential a commitment to performing the opera with modern understandings of power and sexual violence is imperative.

Die Zauberflöte (1791)

Die Zauberflöte is often considered an entry level opera, suitable for the whole family. It is a *singspiel*, so it features spoken dialogue as well as musical numbers (the 18th century German answer to the contemporary musical); it is a fantastical tale with magic and monsters; Papageno is a funny bird man that children often latch on to. All of these aspects make it fun and engaging for children and companies often make cuts and perform the dialogue in the language of the audience to make it further accessible to not only children, but a contemporary audience. It is also some of Mozart's most accessible music—almost everyone can hum the Queen of the Night's aria, whether they know they're humming Mozart or not, it's that ubiquitous in our culture. It deserves its place in the canon as a masterpiece that helps to establish opera fans from a young age.

When looking at the work in its complete form, however, some issues arise for the critical viewer. The setting is ambiguous, Tamino is denoted as a "Javanese prince" and Monostatos as a "Moor," Sarastro sings about Egyptian deities Isis and Osiris, and early productions referenced both neo-classical architecture and Islamic influence in the costumes.³⁶ This bizarre mishmash of cultures is the result of Mozart and librettist Emanuel Schikaneder

³⁵ "Ten Most Played Titles," Operabase.

³⁶ Rushton, 112.

writing what is generally understood today as an allegorical tale of Freemasonry.³⁷ They relied heavily on some stereotypes of the time to share this message which is grating to the modern audience.

The most offending elements of *Zauberflöte* are its treatment of women, race, and class. The Queen of the Night is the villain characterized by her power and anger and she urges her daughter Pamina to kill Sarastro, and yet in her first aria she is imploring Tamino to rescue her daughter for him. She contains a number of contradictions, but is generally accepted as purely evil. Women are maligned time and again by the male characters, from the Speaker saying, “A woman does little, chatters a lot...”³⁸ to the priests warning Tamino to “Be on your guard against women’s wiles...”³⁹ According to the libretto, women are liars and deceivers, except the choice few (like the pure of heart Pamina). Contemporary productions can present the Queen in a more nuanced light and often make cuts and edits to the more offensive text, but it is worth noting what is in the original material.

The character Monostatos, a “Moor,” is evil essentially because of his skin color. In his aria he says, “I should avoid love, because a black man is ugly.”⁴⁰ He bemoans his fate as unlovable and being charmed by Pamina, a “white woman.”⁴¹ This aria could be incredibly compelling and a commentary on race and societal pressures shaping a person, but it would need conscious and careful direction from a person of color. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case in an opera production and Monostatos is flattened to a general monster. The issue of Monostatos has been written on extensively in recent years, with no one coming to a good conclusion of how to

³⁷ Rushton, 112.

³⁸ Castel, *Die Zauberflöte Libretto*, 587.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 610.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 619.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

reckon with the character.⁴² Productions often excise the issue of Monostatos rather than facing it head on, perhaps the right choice when putting together a family show, but a choice that needs to be fully understood before making it.

Finally, the issue of class is one that is often overlooked by contemporary directors. Many of Mozart's operas include insightful commentary on class, but in *Zauberflöte* (due to its Masonic ideals) the "unenlightened" lower class characters of Papageno and Papagena are reduced to subhuman. Papageno is presented as a fool and a coward and his female counterpart is only an extension of his character. His is the comedic foible to the serious journey of Tamino.⁴³ Unless contextualized, this representation of lower class characters is unacceptable to a modern audience. Modern productions lean into the magical element of Papageno and his comedy, but the root of the character is in Masonic ideals of enlightenment and knowledge, or lack thereof.

There are themes of truth, beauty, and balance in *Die Zauberflöte* that are worth sharing with contemporary audiences. The Freemasons were born of the Enlightenment and while they espoused ideals of knowledge and truth, there was a dark side to what made their enlightenment possible—namely the disenfranchisement of women, people of color, and the poor. Only extensive program notes and education about the history behind this work allow it to be performed in full in a modern context. However, cuts and changes to text can make it more immediately accessible to a wider audience and with such wonderful music that is worth something.

⁴² Lösel, Steffen, "Monostatos: Racism in *Die Zauberflöte*"; Cole, Malcolm S., "Monostatos and His "Sister" Racial Stereotype in *Die Zauberflöte* and Its Sequel"; Howards, Alyssa, "Beyond the Glockenspiel: Teaching Race and Gender in Mozart's *Zauberflöte*."

⁴³ Baker, P.G., "'Night into Day': Patterns of Symbolism in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*," 106.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Artists today have no choice but to fully engage with the world around them. In this age of media saturation it is impossible to turn your head from what is going on in the world. As we look to the past and standard repertoire we see many faults in the people and society that created these works of art, and yet this art is still meaningful to us. It is still worth working tirelessly to expand the canon and rediscover works by marginalized artists of the past and present, but adding to the canon does not take away from the art that has already established itself in our hearts and minds. With thoughtful research and open dialogue we can appreciate the whole of a work, both the good and the bad. In my final performance project I found value not only in the actual performance of these works, but in the study and practice that went into bringing them to the stage. That complete engagement has made my time here so much more valuable to me as both an artist and a person. We must engage with the complicated history of Western music (and culture) and look to the future with a mind towards abundance and what our art can mean to not only our contemporaries, but future generations.

What is so exciting is that there are so many others working towards this vision for the future of our art. I thought when I began this project that I would have to dig for nuanced sources on these works and composers, but people have been doing this research and writing for years. I see it as my job as a member of the academy to lift up the work of others and do my own thoughtful programming and teaching. Since the birth of my daughter I have been thinking beyond how opera is received today, to what it can look like in the future—an artform that is still vibrant and growing, a canon that is ever expanding and built on the masterworks of the past, which are understood as multifaceted works of art created by people. Because the constant across

the centuries is that art is made for and by people, with all their complexities and flaws, and that is what makes it meaningful.

Appendix A

**Solo DMA Recital
May 9, 2023
Ulrich Recital Hall**

Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod (1918)

*The Lament of Ian the Proud
Thy Dark Eyes to Mine
The Rose of the Night*

Charles T. Griffes (1884–1920)

On this Island, Op. 11 (1937)

*Let the florid music praise
Now the leaves are falling fast
Seascape
Nocturne
As it is, plenty*

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

INTERMISSION

Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme (1862)

*Der Engel
Stehe still!
Im Treibhaus
Schmerzen
Träume*

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Selections from Acht Gedichte, Op. 10 (1887)

*Die Georgine
Die Zeitlose
Allerseelen
Zueignung*

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Appendix B

**University of Maryland School of Music Presents
DON GIOVANNI
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

**April 14, 19, 21, & 23, 2023
Kay Theater, University of Maryland**

CAST

Don Giovanni.....Henrique Carvalho
Leporello.Craig Smith
Donna Anna..Rhiannon Vaughn
Donna Elvira.Kira Neary
Zerlina..Victoria McGrath
Masetto.....Justin Harrison*
Don Ottavio.....Lawrence Barasa
Il Commendatore.....VaShawn McIlwain-Lightfoot*

*MOS Alumni

CHORUS

Anthony Anderson, Sydney Black, Amelia Brooks-Everist, Bella Cadirola,
Louis Cleare, Valérie Filloux, Lily Gallihue, Claire Iverson, Jacob Lincoln,
Catherine Moss, Grace Null, Olivia O'Brien, Jonas Rimkunas, Aiden Wilbur

ARTISTIC STAFF

Conductor: Craig Kier
Stage Director: Corinne Hayes
Assistant Conductor: Mariana Corichi Gómez
Chorus Master: Mark Helms
Musical Preparation: Guzal Isametdinova, Pei-Hsuan Lin, Steven Bailey
Italian Diction: Corradina Caporello
Scenic Design: Brandon Roak
Lighting Design: Heather Reynolds
Costume Design: Becca Janney
Wig and Makeup Design: Priscilla Bruce
Choreographer: Sarah Beth Oppenheim
Fight and Intimacy Direction: Casey Kaleba
Assistant Director: Jessica Harika
Stage Manager: Allison Bailey

Program is approximately 3 hours

Appendix C

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

Die Zauberflöte

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

November 17, 18, 19 & 21, 2023

Kay Theater, University of Maryland

CAST

Pamina.....Clare Lillig (Nov. 17 & 19), Francesca Napolitano (Nov. 18 & 21)
Queen of the Night.....Amanda Densmoor (Nov. 18 & 21), Morgan Paige (Nov. 17 & 19)
First Lady.....Rhiannon Vaughn
Second Lady.....Connor Locke
Third Lady.....Jessica Harika
Tamino.....Colin Doyle*
Papageno.....Matthew Payne
Sarastro.....Casey Germain
Monostatos.....Michael Butler
Papagena.....Kira Neary
Speaker/Priest.....Henrique Carvalho
1st Armored Man/2nd Priest.....Lawrence Barasa
2nd Armored Man/1st Priest/Speaker.....Craig Smith
1st Knabe.....Amelia Brooks-Everist
2nd Knabe.....Isabella Cadirola
3rd Knabe.....Anuoluwapo Adefiwitan

*MOS Alumni

CHORUS

Josh Bates, Brynn Farlow, Matré Grant, Inayat Jain, Tara Kitchelt, Jacob Lincoln, Helen Mann,
Victoria McGrath, Alea Powell, Colton Smith, Joel Zinkievich

ARTISTIC STAFF

Conductor: Craig Kier (Nov. 17, 19 & 21), Jonathan King (Nov. 18)

Director: Amanda Consol

Assistant Conductor: Jonathan King

Chorus Master: Amy Nicole Broadbent

Principal Coach: Justina Lee

Musical Preparation: Erica Guo, Pei-Hsuan Lin, Sepehr Davallou

Lighting Designer: Christina Kouni Smith

Projection Designers: Taylor Verrett, Devin Kinch

Costume Coordinator: Susan Chiang

Assistant Director: Erin Ridge

Production Stage Manager: Erin Taylor

Reduced Orchestration: Jonathan Lyness

Annotated Bibliography

Anderson, Donna K. *Charles T. Griffes: A life in music*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993.

Although not a household name, Charles T. Griffes is a prominent figure in American classical music—namely as the only true American Impressionist. He had a number of works published during his lifetime and the publishers Henmar Press Inc. and G. Schirmer Inc. have been reprinting and issuing posthumous releases of his music. In his short life Griffes spanned compositional styles and towards the end of his life wrote what can be considered American Impressionist music. He kept diaries and letters, these in tandem with interviews with his family and friends, paint the picture of a quiet and passionate young man who loved music.

Anderson, Donna K., “Griffes, Charles T(omlinson),” *Grove Music Online*. 2001. Accessed 18 April 2023. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.1170>.

Charles Tomlinson Griffes was born in Elmira, NY in 1884. He studied music in Berlin, Germany with a number of notable pianists and composers of the era. Upon returning to the US he took a job as director of music at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY. He held that post until his death in 1920. Griffes was a quiet man, but maintained a number of deep friendships. Friends remembered him for his humor, honesty, and modesty. He maintained a full time job because he was wholly unromantic about his career as a composer. Griffes wrote works for stage, orchestra, chamber ensembles, voice, piano, chorus, and organ. His early works show the influence of his German romantic education with later works showing influences from Eastern music and impressionism.

Baker, P.G. “‘Night into Day’: Patterns of Symbolism in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (Winter 1979/80): 95-116.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/513632/summary>

At surface level Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* is a simple fairytale, but it is actually the most misunderstood of his operas. It is filled with symbolism and allusions to Freemasonry. Both Mozart and Emmanuel Schikaneder, the librettist, were Masons and sought to illuminate the ideals of the Enlightenment and Freemasonry in their *singspiel*. It comes to light that Mozart and Schikaneder were not in complete agreement as to how these ideals should be represented—Mozart thought Papageno's buffoonery a step too far, for example. *Die Zauberflöte* is a complex work with many hidden meanings.

Baldwin, Heather J. *Richard Wagner's “Wesendonck Lieder”: The perfect synthesis between the Master and his Muse*. DMA Dissertation, University of Kansas, 2018.

Wagner's *Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme* were composed using texts written by Mathilde Wesendonck. It is widely known Wagner worked on *Tristan und Isolde* in tandem with these lieder and much attention has been given to the influence his relationship with Wesendonck had on the opera, but less so to these five songs. Wagner introduced Wesendonck to the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer and the renunciation of the will, the impact of this philosophical idea is seen both in the libretto of *Tristan* and the poetry of *Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme*. Their relationship and artistic partnership lead to some of the most fruitful and masterful works for each of them.

Biran, Jane. "The Wagner Syndrome." *The Jerusalem Report*. Feb 10, 2020. 7.

<https://www.proquest.com/magazines/wagner-syndrome/docview/2370537653/se-2>.

How does one separate the art from the artist? While viewing a show by Gauguin this author poses the questions, knowing what we do of the artist's personal life. The issue comes up time and again, from children's authors to visual artists. This question is most pressing when it comes to the work of Richard Wagner. Wagner made his detestable views towards Jews known and his works and philosophy were championed posthumously by Hitler and the Nazi party. In supporting the work of a known deceased antisemite are you supporting antisemitism? The question ultimately comes down to the individual, but there is a great deal of wonderful art made by terrible people.

Brett, Philip, Heather Wiebe, Jennifer Doctor, Judith LeGrove, and Paul Banks. "Britten, (Edward) Benjamin." *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 27 April 2023.

<https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000046435>.

With Michael Tippett, Benjamin Britten was the dominant figure in English art music in the 20th century. A conductor, pianist, and composer, Britten is regarded as responsible for the renaissance of English opera in the 20th century. Born in Lowescroft, England, the son of a dentist, Britten's early musical pursuits were encouraged by his mother who had dreams of him one day becoming the fourth B in classical music—among the echelon of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Britten's career proved to be prolific and his role in English music cannot be overstated. He was also passionate about the accessibility of the arts in English culture, a cause Britten Pears Arts continues to champion to this day.

Britten and W. H. Auden: from Paul Bunyan to Hymn to St Cecilia. English National Opera.

Accessed 29 April 2023. <https://www.eno.org/discover-opera/britten-and-w-h-auden-from-paul-bunyan-to-hymn-to-st-cecilia/>.

Unusual friends, W.H. Auden was known for his aggressive intellect and outspoken personality, while a young Benjamin Britten was known to be shy and retiring. Upon meeting in 1935 to work on a film for the General Post Office Film Unit, the two creatives became friends and artistic collaborators for a number of years. What they had in common was a supreme ability to write in any genre—be it comic or dramatic, satirical or sincere. Their friendship resulted in a number of documentary films, art songs, radio features, choral works, and the opera *Paul Bunyan*. Auden and Britten's friendship waned after a number of years, perhaps due in part to Auden's more domineering personality, but the two remained in occasional contact for many years.

Brown-Montesano, Kristi. *Understanding the Women of Mozart's Operas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

For centuries the men in Mozart's operas have been discussed most seriously by critics, but what about the women of these works? Mozart's operas offer a wide range of complex female characters who deserve serious consideration and study. From Donna Anna's righteous fury that has made her unpalatable and misunderstood as cold to the clever and in charge Susanna,

Mozart's female characters have a great deal to offer modern audiences and performers alike. Historical context is taken into account and rounds out the picture of who these characters are and what Mozart may have had in mind when writing for them.

Cabaud, Judith. *Mathilde Wesendonck: Isolde's Dream*. Milwaukee, WI: Amadeus Press, 2017. Mathilde Wesendonck has long been understood as Wagner's muse while writing *Tristan und Isolde*, but this is the first comprehensive publication on her life and work. Born Agnes Mathilde Luckemeyer, she married Otto Wesendonck, a silk merchant who traveled internationally regularly for work, leaving his young wife to her own pursuits. Otto was a fan of Richard Wagner and soon became one of his benefactors. Upon meeting, Wagner was infatuated with Mathilde and she soon found herself drawn to him as well. Their infatuation with one another would lead to some of their greatest works. Wesendonck was an artist in her own right who benefited from Wagner's closeness as he did from hers, together they were inspired by the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer to write about epic and all-consuming love.

Cole, Malcolm S. "Monostatos and His "Sister" Racial Stereotype in *Die Zauberflöte* and Its Sequel." *The Opera Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 2-26, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/183359>

At the time of its publication, the characterization of Monostatos as an evil Moor was acceptable. Racism and colonization made this stereotype ring true for historical audiences. Monostatos is a more complex character than Schikaneder's libretto allows him to be, but with his musical writing Mozart creates the possibility of sympathy for this maligned character. He is merely a visitor to the realm of Sarastro, misplaced, misunderstood, and mistreated. In the sequel to *Die Zauberflöte*, *Labyrinth*, written by Schikaneder, the character Gura is treated just as poorly. These stereotypes, while accepted in the past, reveal the dark side of the Enlightenment and its ideals.

Gilliam, Bryan, and Charles Youmans. "Strauss, Richard." *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 28 April 2023. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040117>.

Born in Munich in 1864, Richard Strauss became the most important German composer of the 20th century after the death of Wagner. In a career that was almost eight decades, Strauss composed works of almost every genre. He was most well known for his tone poems and operas. His vocal writing is exceptionally good especially for the soprano voice, due in part to his wife Pauline de Ahna's vocation as a professional singer, but his writing for all voice types shows an intimate understanding of the human voice and how it operates. Strauss's most prolific years as a composer were in the 1930s, although it was also a time of extreme personal and political unrest.

Howards, Alyssa. "Beyond the Glockenspiel: Teaching Race and Gender in Mozart's *Zauberflöte*." *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German* 47, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 1-13. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/unteteacgerm.47.1.1>

Language teachers use cultural sources, such as opera, to enrich their students' study. Many German teachers use Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, but to make it relevant to modern students they

must contextualize the work. Themes of race and gender, and their misrepresentation in *Die Zauberflöte*, open the door to making this work engaging and illuminating to German language students. Units on the Queen of the Night and Monostatos, respectively, can expose students to a wide range of new vocabulary and engage them with Mozart's music.

Hunter, Mary. *Mozart's Operas: A companion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. Mozart is the foremost composer of operas that still remain in the canon whose instrumental works are equally prized as standard repertoire. There is also a belief that his operas appeal to even those who do not like opera, because they are in some way more musical. There is an element of truth in that Mozart's operas were thoughtfully instrumented and composed with the instrumental aspect of the work being of equal importance to the singing. Not only that but his works get to the point and have a clearly laid format—recitative, aria, and ensemble. You know what you are getting when you get into a Mozart opera. Breaking each of his operas down into these parts and looking at the compositional history gives a full picture of the oeuvre of Mozart's operas.

Lösel, Steffen. "Monostatos: Racism in *Die Zauberflöte*." *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 102, no. 4 (2019): 275-324. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/736390>
Due to colonization and imperialism, racism and the view of dark skinned people as less than was the norm in the Western world for hundreds of years. Mozart was a product of his time, and although he was close with Angelo Soliman, a well respected African living in Vienna, he did not question Emmanuel Schikaneder's character Monostatos, the evil Moor. The ideals of the Enlightenment purported to shine light on ignorance, but with modern eyes we see that it had many blindspots, one glaringly in the issue of race and anthropology.

Miller, Malcolm Bernard Bela. *Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder: An analytical study*. PhD Thesis, Kings College London, 1990.
A comprehensive analysis of the *Wesendonck Lieder* had not been published prior to this work. This thesis traces the relationship between Richard Wagner and Mathilde Wesendonck and maps out the compositional history of these songs. It breaks down the analysis of the lieder into analysis of the poem, Schenckian analysis, tonal-durational analysis, Schachterian rhythmic analysis, Meyerian linear analysis, motivic transformation, music and poetry, texture analysis, and instrumentation creating a detailed and full picture of these masterpieces.

Rushton, Julian. *The New Grove Guide to Mozart and His Operas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a master of three forms of opera, Italian *operas seria* and *buffa*, and German *singspiel*, and although he did not write any operas in French, translations in his lifetime of *Bastien und Bastienne* and *Idomeneo* means he has operas covering the three big languages. He is the only composer to have had his works remain in the canon since his lifetime, never falling out of performance. Mozart was raised in a musical family and was a known piano prodigy, but opera played an important role in his musical origins as well. The opera a young Mozart first encountered was in Italian, because even in Austria and Germany at the time Italian opera was the norm. In his lifetime he wrote 22 operas, many of which are still considered standard repertoire today.

Spencer, Stewart. *Wagner Remembered*. London: Faber and Faber, 2000.

Richard Wagner was almost as famous for his personality as his music. These are first hand reminiscences of the composer broken down into different periods of his life. Accounts range from Robert Schumann to Queen Victoria. These first hand accounts are accumulated at the end of each section to piece together the man Wagner may have been, the picture that emerges is a passionate, temperamental figure prone to wild changes in mood, but a highly charismatic individual.

“Ten Most Played Titles.” *Operabase*. Accessed 28 April 2023. <https://www.operabase.com/statistics/en>.

Operabase documents operatic performances around the world, with over 600,000 in its database. It compiles this data to produce statistics for opera performances around the world. It also records the work of individual artists and companies and publishes this information in 34 languages to make it accessible to as many people as possible. They have published statistics on most played titles, most performed composers, most performances by city, country, and more. This information gives a glimpse into the state of opera around the world in real time.