

Katrina Goulbourne

Professor Gibson

MUA 161-06

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## What's So Great about the 'Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias'

Christi Amonson's article titled, *What's So Great about the Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias*, explains the importance of devotion through study and practice, music majors apply to these acclaimed masterpieces. As either a student, teacher, performer, or simply one who has an appreciation for the arts, Amonson asks those to take a closer look at a couple of the Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias, focusing on the basic music history and composition style behind each composer's respective piece, why each piece remains part of the fundamental repertoire for teaching vocal technique through said songs that have withstood the test of time, and an emotional brilliance included in the interpretations of these songs, through both the performer and audience.

Singers are asked to continuously revisit the "voice teacher's bible" because each song contains the basic building blocks of a strong understanding and foundation for classical vocal technique. The finest composers from the 1600's, created such vocal lines and melodies through big staged works for specific reasons and results in any given circumstance, pertaining to all performers and listeners. Composer Giulio Caccini, wrote directions for ornamentation while Claudio Monteverdi solidified the musical opera form with enough substance to receive an emotional response from Italian audiences. Both composition styles left European elites craving more, raising the arias popularity

and availability through publication and performance. In 1894, Alessandro Parisotti edited a three volume work of *Sixty Italian Songs and Arias* that we now see in G. Schirmer publicized yellow book, which hold a 20<sup>th</sup> century modern standard. Pierto Florida later applied romanticized harmony and accompaniment changes, with an aim for the best melodies to be fully understood and appreciated not just by devoted music majors, but by everyone who loves music. In 1991, the works were edited and published yet again by John Glenn Patron and Alfred for the reason of, preserving the songs as they were originally intended, in the most honest form possible including suggested ornamentation dynamics and breathing marks, by the best composers of the early years. Finally in 2007, Roger Nichols edited *Thirty Italian Songs and Arias* once again without introducing any editorial dynamics, encouraging singer to apply their own taste to ornamentation and dynamics, being just as imaginative and intelligent as singers in the past. Singers executing composed works of the Italian Songs and Arias learn and establish their classical vocal through a meaningful study.

The collected works remain a crucial part of the fundamental repertoire for teaching vocal techniques through practicing these songs and requiring attention to technical detail and musical delivery. The melodies, text, and emotional connection present in the *Italian Songs and Arias*, form lovely vocal technique, and characterization without an overwhelming amount of memorization, contains a warm, rich, resonant tone showing vocal ability, aids in perfecting vowel and double consonant pronunciation in one's quest to master Italian dictation, and require vocal register changes and engaged breathing techniques to sustain phrasing, while showing off higher and lower notes in fermata and cadence. Everything about these songs makes them

great and when executed with correct classical vocal agility, accuracy, and emotion, the singer will surely captivate all those listening. I strongly believe and support the notion that when dedicating time and devotion to the study of any selected piece from the *Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias*, it is time well spent, not wasted, and vocal technique develops from the core in positive and precise form. Importance also lies within the singer's understanding of the phrasing, just as much as the breathe support and proper formation of the mouth, tongue, and jaw. While the latter maintains and produces the elegant sound and space for notes to flow and escape, the former produces feeling, emotion, and sensation that must also flow and escape or be present and shared with the audience.

## Work Cited

1. Amonson, Christi. "Classical Singer Community." Classical Singer Community. Classical Singer, Inc., Mar. 2016. Web. 21 Feb. 2017.
2. The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Giulio Caccini." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 20 July 1998. Web. 21 Feb. 2017.

Raymond Danicki

February 19, 2017

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## What's So Great about the Twenty-Four Italian Arias? Everything

By Raymond Danicki

For a vocal music major, one thing will always be true. At some point, they will sing a few selections from the Twenty-Four Italian Arias. The issue nowadays is that many students will question why they are singing these songs when they could sing a musical theatre piece or a piece in German or French that is very different in melody. The answer is simple. The reason our voice directors give us the students these songs is because they give they are practically the blueprint for a successful soloist as they introduce all the techniques needed to perform at an elite level. Within this essay, I will explain the beauty of the Twenty-Four Italian Arias by reading the article "What's So Great about the Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias?" by Christi Armonson as well as giving my input on the article itself.

As this document begins, we are told that these masterpieces should not be avoided as, "each song is filled with pedagogical techniques to build classical vocal technique" (Amonson, pg. 1, prg. 1). The first reason the author gives for why the arias are performed so much is the melody line. The reason behind this is because she states that "the melodies were created for singers by the finest composers of the day" (pg. 1, prg. 2). She later goes on to explain that the reason for the popularity of the songs back in the 1600's due to how available they were. The author then goes on to explain how these are staples to teach as each song has a melodic line that progresses through a singer's register evenly. She then goes on to explain how each piece goes through the

ABA format (chorus, verse, chorus) which gives the musician a chance to give the selection style. This would then lead to the song being published all over the world, all throughout the years. The author caps this document off by explaining why three of the twenty-four songs have especially stood the test of time. In *Caro Mio Ben's* case, its melody and text, with *O del mio dolce ardor*, it's the conversation between the piano and voice, and in *Amarilli Mia Bella* you are given the opportunity to master your vowels. This entire piece provides so much insight into these selections. This happens to lead to my next part.

My view on the document is that it has so much content. With a vast amount of content, comes an excellent document. Whether it is the part where the author talks about her interpretation of the Arias, or if it's the part on why the songs are so teachable, I cannot get enough. The other part I enjoy about the essay is that it delivers on the promise made in the thesis on why the Arias are so great. Overall, it is just a phenomenal essay that delivers on all levels and is enjoyable to all audiences, whether they're a vocal music major or not.

In conclusion, music would not be where it is today if it were not for the Twenty-Four Italian Arias. That is further proven in this document as Amonson goes to all lengths to make sure that people understand the importance of these. What I set out to do at the very beginning of this essay was to explain on why the article mentioned above is one that will stand the test of time, just like the Twenty-Four Italian Arias did. If there ever comes a time where this article is not used to show why the Arias are important, then music will not have the class it does now. Had I never been introduced to this music, I would have never had the chance to experience music for what it should be.

Bethany Carroll  
Critique 4  
12/5/16

11:46 pm

## Fall Concert

In Kentucky State University's fall concert the Jazz/ Commercial Music performance blew the audience away. This production went over expectations and was very satisfying to the audience. The production was made up of brass, percussion, and string instruments. Along with beautiful vocalist they came together wonderfully. Jazz music was being well played on stage. The stage was full of lights and decorations that were adding to the performance. The balance between the effects added onto this great concert.

The voices heard on stage were ranging from soprano to baritone. The vocalist was assisted by backup singers while the instrumentalists continued to play off each other. The instruments were loud but balanced by the vocals being strut out. The Instruments included in the performance were horns, drums, bass, guitar, piano, saxophones, trumpets, and trombones. These instruments make up jazz music. Telling from the performance, the artists spent a great time in rehearsals to make everything play together so well.

Another component that added to the performance was the song selection. They performed songs that are about being in love and heartfelt. The way the artist performed seemed as if they were putting in their heart and soul. The dance moves along with it made the audience seem even more interested in the music. It seemed as a joyful and pleasant get together as if the audience was even apart of the production.

In between the performances of the Kentucky State University Commercial Music Ensemble, the Unity Dance Troupe's performed. Their dance routine was very graceful. The three dancers were moving individually while still being connected to each other. They moved as

David Daniels

Music Critique

## Fall Extravaganza “A Soulful Celebration”

Early November Kentucky State’s Gospel Ensemble held a concert in Bradford Hall Auditorium. In the concert not only did Gospel Ensemble perform but they were also many guest performers including GT Alumni and concert choir.

The concert was opened by a song that both GT and concert choir performed together directed by concert choices director, Dr. Keith MCCuthen. The song was very complex with a lot of polyphony. Both the drums (drum set) and piano (keyboard) were used.

Next the concert choir performed using the piano, drum set, and a bass guitar. Each Song was very different. Some were soft and basic others more loud and poly-textual. In each Song you could really hear the different harmony and melodies. Although, they sang well, their performance was slightly boring. The Music choice selections could’ve been better and they sang a lot of what we would typically call “Christmas Music” if we were in a church.

After the intermission Gospel Ensemble performed; directed by MarpJ. RadFord. In each song they used the piano, guitar, drums, and even used a beat pad. Each song seemed to have it’s own level of complexity. Each song was used to move the people and try to keep everyone involved. There was a lot of emotion put in each song. The



choreography was a little unexpected but looked very good.

Overall the concert went well. The audience was very involved. At some points it got spiritual not only in the audience but with in the choirs as well.