

HIGHS AND LOWS OF THE BARITENOR VOICE:
EXPLORING THE OTHER MALE HYBRID

by

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ABSTRACT

The use of voice types as labels to describe the attributes of voices, both mature and developing, is common among scholars and teachers of singing. Bass, baritone, and tenor are the primary labels used to classify male voices whose production is dominated by chest voice. The bass-baritone is a widely recognized male voice hybrid, borrowing traits from both the bass category and the baritone category. The hybrid counterpart of the bass-baritone is the baritenor, which borrows traits from the baritone category and the tenor category.

The first half of this document explains the hybrid baritenor voice from a pedagogical standpoint through the examination of registers in the voice, registration and terminology, registration events, and the role of range, timbre, and tessitura in the classification of voices. The second half features art song repertoire in keys meant to encourage the exploration of the baritenor's dual vocal identity. Selections from the baritone and tenor operatic and oratorio repertoire are also featured. These selections are useful in cultivating the baritenor voice; the roles may be sung in their entirety by the mature baritenor.

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Varetta Ann Beach.

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INTRODUCTION

Voice types are categories of voices that share similar traits (primarily range, timbre, and tessitura) determined by the physical dimensions of a singer's larynx and vocal tract. These types are used as labels to identify the general characteristics of an individual voice; for example, a soprano has a higher range and tessitura than a mezzo-soprano. The labels are also used to classify music according to the same criteria.

The use of primary type labels (soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass) is an integral part of both studying and teaching voice. The labels are vocal identities, used on applications, resumes, and audition forms, and serve as guides in repertoire studies.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the practice of labeling voices is complicated since each primary type is further broken down into subcategories that get very specific and are sometimes borrowed from the *fach* system.¹ Given their specificity, subcategories are very useful in describing individual voices within a primary type but some voices blur the lines between primary types.

This paper is a pedagogical argument for the recognition of one such voice among male singers: the baritenor. The concept and its usefulness are explained by examining male voice types, registration and terminology, registration events, and the importance of range, timbre, and tessitura in determining voice types.

¹ The German *fach* system categorizes operatic voices based not only on their individual vocal color and capabilities but also on the physical appearance of the singer. This system is used around the world to guide a student's repertoire studies based on the roles he may be expected to perform as a contracted member of an operatic company.

MALE VOICE TYPES

Among males there are three primary voice types whose production is dominated by the chest register: bass, baritone, and tenor. In range these voices are separated by a minor third. This distance is an approximation as voices vary widely. The distance between any two adjacent voice types may be lesser or greater (especially when considering the sounds produced by specific human beings) because the determinate elements of vocal classification are weighted differently by each listener.

Another type, though rarer than the primary three, lies between the bass and the baritone and is commonly recognized as a bass-baritone. The use of this designation is quite common among singers, teachers, and scholars. The great American vocal pedagogue Richard Miller provides one example of its usage in the title of his last book, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, & Bass Voices*.² This hybrid voice possesses a range slightly higher than that of the bass and, often but not always, without the full upper extension of the baritone (in some cases the difference may be as small as a major or minor second). In rare cases the range may be exactly that of a traditional bass or baritone, but the timbre capabilities are so extraordinary as to justify the hybrid designation.

The bass-baritone also accesses timbres associated with both types. In his lower voice he generally has a darker or more somber quality (a color associated with bass timbre), and in the upper middle and high voice the sound becomes noticeably brighter (a quality associated with

² Richard Miller, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

baritone timbre). His registration events lie between those of the bass (the first passaggio³ at A-flat₃⁴ and the second at D-flat₄) and the baritone (the first passaggio at B₃ and the second at E₄). His tessitura, of course, will vary greatly (depending on the degree of coordination between the muscles that control the different registers of his voice and his physical stamina in maintaining this delicate balance) but must necessarily encompass the notes approaching his first passaggio, the area between the first and second passaggio, termed *zona di passaggio*, as well as a minor third above the second passaggio. This combination of range, tessitura, registration events, and blend of timbres (the result of the physical structure of the larynx in combination with the resonators of the chest, throat, mouth, and head as well as the development of a workable system of breath support) leads to the distinctive vocal quality associated with the bass-baritone:

As indicated in table I, register events for the bass-baritone occur between those of the baritone and the bass. The bass-baritone combines the lyricism of the baritone with the richness of the bass. His timbre may remind of the baritone, or it may take on characteristics of the bass. The graciousness of a smoothly delivered bass-baritone quality is ideal for the projection of respected authority and personal warmth. With the resonance balance of his instrument, the bass-baritone is well equipped to sculpture dramatic character portrayals of both serious and comic proportions.⁵

Of particular interest is the fact that only one hybrid category is commonly recognized among male voices. Miller, along with many other scholars and pedagogues, has devoted chapters and books to the exploration and technical advancement of the male voice, bringing to light this remarkable, unique sound so unusual in its capabilities. How is it then that we, as voice teachers and students of singing, speak derisively of the other hybrid possibility, the *baritenor*,

³ Despite its foreign origins, *passaggio* (plural, *passaggi*) is regularly used in vocal writings in English. A *passaggio* is the point at which control of phonation moves from one muscle group to another.

⁴ This document uses the system of octave designation adopted by The Acoustical Society of America. The lowest C on the piano keyboard is designated C₁, the C an octave above is C₂, etc. C₄ is middle C on the piano keyboard. Notes above each C are identified using the designation of the C below them.

⁵ Richard Miller, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, 11.

and do not wonder at its very origin in our collective vocabulary? Any vocalist in the world would recognize the label and have a personal opinion on the relative merits of such a voice. The label even exists as an entry in Wikipedia.⁶ To be absolutely clear, the use of the label baritenor in this document is in no way unique to the author; it has existed in the language of voice teachers for many years, usually as a pejorative and rarely in praise of a voice that could do what others could not.⁷ Does such a voice exist? Indeed, it does. Unfortunately, many such voices are prematurely cast in a mold that does not suit. Some teachers foist a heavy, dark production upon the voice in an attempt to suit the baritone category and some become champions of *voce aperta*⁸ in the upper register that can be detrimental to the development of a healthy, ringing tenor voice. Forcing any voice beyond its natural capabilities is flirting with disaster and can lead to countless vocal problems, both physical and psychological.

⁶ The website is notoriously unreliable insofar as one trusts the accurate documentation of the facts contained therein. I use it here simply to illustrate the fact that the word baritenor is part of the collective vocabulary.

⁷ The spelling and lack of hyphenation predate this document.

⁸ The literal translation of *voce aperta* is open voice. It refers to singing in an open, unprotected way, especially in the upper voice.

REGISTRATION

Any serious discussion of vocal categories by scholars, singers, or teachers of singing must refer to and be grounded in the phenomenon of registration. It is universally accepted that registers in the human voice exist, just as in any other instrument. Whether woodwind, brass, string, etc., every musical instrument is capable of producing a variety of sounds that can be, and often are, divided into groups of pitches that share a similar quality or timbre. The unique timbre of each group is the combined result of the mechanical action that produces the vibration (reeds in woodwinds, lips in brass instruments, and the bow combined with different strings of varying tension and thickness in string instruments) and the capacity of the resonating chamber to amplify that vibration. Resonance is a matter of sympathetic vibration within and of the resonating chamber. It accentuates a particular series of overtones or partials in relation to the fundamental pitch. The combined effect of the mechanical action and the resonating chamber(s) provides a wide variety of timbres for any given pitch.

On many instruments, especially wind and string, there exist a number of ways to produce a particular pitch. The most apropos example is perhaps the violin. It can produce A-440 on more than one string but each string on which the pitch is produced will impart a unique timbre to the resulting sound, as each string varies in thickness and tension. Similarly, the human voice is capable of producing C₄ in a variety of ways. While the singer may not be aware of the differing mechanical actions that control the length and thickness of the vocal folds, the unique timbre of each “different” C₄ is still the result of the changing balance between the

muscle systems responsible for phonation and the shape and size of the resonating chambers employed.

While having a choice of resonating chambers is not unique to the voice, the voice is capable of astonishing variety and subtlety in the manipulation of its resonating chambers. Since the voice's capabilities are the result of natural attributes, it follows that the palette of timbres in the human voice is necessarily limited by the physical structure and musculature of each individual larynx, as well as the size and shape of an individual's resonating chambers. It is just these differences that lie at the heart of this discussion. Voice teachers are obliged to make assessments of the natural attributes of a student without the aid of physical measurement beyond what the eye may see and the ear may hear, thus leading to an array of opinions concerning registration in the human voice.

REGISTERS OF THE VOICE

A register is a series of consecutive homogenous sounds produced by one mechanism, differing essentially from another series of sounds equally homogenous produced by another mechanism, whatever modifications of *timbre* and of strength they may offer.⁹

There are many ideas and theories about the number of registers in the voice. Scientific study of the structure and function of the larynx (pioneered in the nineteenth century by the author of the quote above) has shown that there are numerous muscles inside the larynx that control the movement of its various cartilages. In relation to singing, these muscles are best understood in two groups (as these are the only two groups capable of both supporting sustained singing and regulating pitch): the thyro-arytenoid muscles (the inside lining of which is known as the vocal cords) and the crico-thyroid muscles. The first forms a link between the thyroid cartilage and the arytenoid cartilages and the second forms a link between the cricoid cartilage at the base of the larynx and the thyroid cartilage. The thyro-arytenoid muscles lie roughly horizontal at the top of the larynx and manipulate pitch by controlling the thickness and tension of the cords as well as the closure of the glottis (the space between and beneath the vocal cords). The crico-thyroid muscles lie roughly vertical at the base of the larynx and contract to tilt the entire larynx forward; thus, manipulating pitch by controlling the length of the cords. This tilting action also has a subsidiary impact on the thickness of the cords as well as their closure. Both the thyro-arytenoid muscles and the crico-thyroid muscles, in conjunction with the movement of air from the lungs (or into the lungs, though very rare and usually as a sound effect), are capable

⁹ Manuel Garcia, *Hints on Singing*, new and revised ed., trans. Beata Garcia (New York: Joseph Patelson Music House, Ltd., 1982), 8.

of producing a series of pitches. The series of pitches produced by the thyro-arytenoid muscles is traditionally labeled chest register and that produced by the crico-thyroid muscles, falsetto.

In most cases, the independent action of the thyro-arytenoid muscles and the crico-thyroid muscles is hypothetical. Most people tend to achieve coordination between these muscular processes naturally and unknowingly, though this untrained coordination is oftentimes insufficient for sustained classical singing. In voice training, though, the hypothetical isolation of these muscular actions is paramount to the understanding of vocal registers and the eventual coordination of the action of the muscles. Many female musical theatre students often inquire about the weak, diffuse sound of their mix or middle voice as they make the transition into their upper voice and male students wonder why they can't bellow above E₄ or F₄. Both problems are the result of a lack of coordination between the muscles controlling each register. In their development, studied or otherwise, one register has been overdeveloped while the other has been mostly ignored (easily determined via a few questions about their vocal history). Whether or not the information is given to the student (or even fully understood by the teacher), the isolated development of each register (with the eventual goal of integrated, coordinated effort) lies at the center of successful singing, classical or otherwise.

The point of contention among many teachers is simply this: how many registers does the voice possess? The number of registers espoused by teachers varies greatly and is the result of the application of register terminology based solely on timbre. In the aforementioned quote, Garcia raises this point. It is important to remember that a singer may change the timbre of his sound through the simple expedient of modifying his resonance chambers (usually through manipulation of the vowel tract or the shape and size of his oral cavity) without altering the balance between the mechanical muscular processes that actually produce the vibration being

amplified. It must be noted that timbre is an important consideration in the differentiation of vocal registers. At some point it becomes necessary for the teacher to recognize the timbre changes due to resonance manipulation and those resulting from a difference in mechanical action, as this change in mechanical action is most important to the recognition and blending of the vocal registers.

The coordination between the action of the thyro-arytenoid muscles and the crico-thyroid muscles (which group is dominant at any given point in the singer's range) can vary greatly. This spectrum of variance has led to the idea of three, four, five, etc., registers in the voice, and even to the concept of a different register corresponding to every pitch that an individual voice is capable of producing. Such theories are not particularly surprising, since neither of the muscle groups can be manipulated directly. Ideas of registration must be centered in the singer and/or teacher's conception of the resulting sound. Unfortunately, the abundance of these theories and the theories themselves hopelessly and unnecessarily complicate the issue. Considering that the thyro-arytenoid muscles and the crico-thyroid muscles are the only two intrinsic muscle systems of the larynx capable of influencing and controlling sustained phonation, it follows that the widely held view of two pure registers in the voice is accurate. All other purported registers are simply the different balances of coordinated action between the two muscle groups and the manipulation of resonators.

Because one learns to sing through sensation, sound, and mental constructs, it is imperative that the two pure registers and their resultant sounds are understood. Only then may the student truly evaluate the balance of coordination between the mechanical actions involved and, based on the quality and sensation of the sound, adjust that action according to the needs of the musical line. For example, if the musical line is ascending beyond the first *passaggio*, at that

point the activity of the crico-thyroid muscles must increase while the thyro-arytenoid muscles correspondingly relax; and, if the musical line is descending beyond the second passaggio, the activity of the thyro-arytenoid muscles must increase while the action of the crico-thyroid muscles correspondingly relax. The well-trained, professional caliber voice evidences both mechanical actions at all times (with the exception of extreme pitch and dynamics used for specific effect); the thyro-arytenoid muscles and the crico-thyroid muscles exist in a state of dynamic balance.¹⁰ Dynamic balance between these muscular processes is always desirable, as it is necessary to achieve the evenness of scale throughout the range that is demanded by the ears of modern day audiences and leads to the perception of a one register voice.

¹⁰ William Vennard, *Singing: the Mechanism and the Technic*, revised ed. (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1967), 58.

REGISTER TERMINOLOGY

While the student may remain ignorant of the mechanics involved in producing his aesthetically pleasing and technically skillful sound, an understanding of the principles and muscle systems involved in registration is vital to the success of the singing teacher. Since the teacher attempts to aid the student in gaining conscious control of involuntary muscle systems, it is important for both the teacher and the student to realize that learning to sing is an exercise in responsive actions to sounds and sensations. It is through mental constructs of these sounds and sensations that the student learns to manipulate the involuntary muscle systems that control phonation.

The first, and perhaps most important mental construct for a student to grasp, is the name of the registers involved in singing. Historically, sensation has played the most significant role in assigning labels to the registers of the human voice. It was not until the scientific vocal explorations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that teachers began to understand the mechanical actions responsible for the sensations of vocal resonance. These traditional labels have varied greatly from teacher to teacher; and, with the development of voice science, the number has expanded exponentially. They include chest, head, middle, mix, falsetto, fry, modal, lift, et al. In particular, chest, head, and falsetto have proven so pervasive that they have even entered into the vocabulary of non-singers. The pervasiveness of these labels is due, in no small

part, to the nomenclature employed by early singing masters. *Petto* (chest), *testa* (head), and, falsetto appear in some of the earliest manuscripts devoted to the art of singing.¹¹

Chest voice and head voice, as labels, are derived from the sensations of the singer while phonating in that portion of the voice. Chest voice, because of the thickness of the vocal cords (the ligament lining the inside of the thyro-arytenoid muscles) during phonation, produces a sympathetic vibration in the upper chest cavity; it is this sensation that led to the application of the label *voce di petto*. Head voice, on the other hand, produces sympathetic vibrations, primarily in the nasal passages and sinus cavities, which contribute to the feeling that the voice is centered in the head which led to the use of the label *voce di testa*. It is unclear, though, exactly what the early masters meant by falsetto. While it is unknown exactly what they did mean by the term, it is clear that they did not mean the sound resulting from the vibration of what we, today, would call the false cords. These false cords have no place in or responsibility for register terminology or sustained classical singing.

I submit that the label falsetto is an example of one derived primarily through the resulting sound. Because the vocal folds are very thin and their closure incomplete, the falsetto register has a weak, breathy sound which is considered “false” (a better description may be “hollow”). Falsetto does, of course, have its own peculiar physical sensation, but the final verdict as to whether or not the student has successfully isolated this register rests primarily with the quality of the resulting sound.

As previously stated, there are only two intrinsic muscle systems of the larynx capable of producing and sustaining the type of phonation necessary to classical singing. The isolated

¹¹ Some examples include the writings of Pier Francesco Tosi (1646-1732), Giambattista Mancini (1714-1800), Manuel Garcia I (1775-1832), Manuel Garcia II (1805-1906), and Giovanni Battista Lamperti (1839-1910).

action of the thyro-arytenoid muscles corresponds to the chest voice and the isolated action of the crico-thyroid muscles corresponds to the falsetto. The head voice, often considered a register all its own, is in reality the coordinated effort of both these intrinsic laryngeal muscle systems. As long as the teacher and student are both of one mind in understanding the labels assigned to the registers and the muscular processes that result in these registers, the path toward significant, professional-grade vocal progress is cleared.

REGISTRATION EVENTS

Despite the many differences in our individual composition as human beings, all voice types, be they male or female (though this paper deals exclusively with the male voice), consist of the combination of the same two registers. Basses, bass-baritones, baritones, baritenors, and tenors, regardless of their respective *fachs*, possess a chest register and a falsetto register. The difference lies in where these registers occur in relation to the voice's overall range, the range of specific pitches encompassed by the muscular mechanism responsible for the production of each register, and at which pitches these registers overlap to produce the phenomena known as *passaggi*.

The range of each type, while very important, is an insufficient method of determining vocal category. The voice type of a given singer is only partially determined by range because that range is fluid over time. This is especially true of younger voices. Range is partially dependent on the elasticity of the vocal cords and the strength of the muscles that control their length and tension. As a voice develops through physical maturity and the practice of singing, the intrinsic muscles of the larynx will strengthen and become more flexible; thereby, causing the range of possible pitches to fluctuate. Considering this level of fluidity in the student's maturing voice, range is of marginal significance in indicating the size and capability of the structure of the larynx.

Probably the least reliable and the most dangerous way to classify a voice is by range. Other than indicating whether a voice is male or female, a relatively simple judgment to make about normal voices, range is a "sometime thing." Particularly in young voices, it can bob up and down like a yo-yo. A mezzo-soprano range is common for a young

soprano who has not yet found the light or head voice. Young male singers frequently have the low notes of a bass and may eventually become baritones or even tenors. A conclusive range is almost always a product of vocal maturity and, as such, is of little use as a tool to classify voices during training.¹²

Since range alone is not enough, teachers also employ their knowledge of registration events in order to classify voices during training. These registration events are the notes at which a voice tends to suddenly break or crack from one register to the next. When descending, the break from falsetto to chest will occur at the first *passaggio*; and, when ascending, the break from chest to falsetto will occur at the second *passaggio*. These breaks occur because at this point the mechanism which began phonation at one pitch level must give way to the other mechanism, which results in a drastic change of quality and timbre. Wherever the first *passaggio* may lie in the voice's range, the second is usually an approximate fourth above. Though certainly not the final word by any means, the recognition of a voice's registration events is one of the most significant pedagogical tools that a teacher has with which to classify, understand, and train voices.

¹² Barbara M. Doscher, *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*, 2d ed. (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 196.

REGISTRATION EVENTS IN THE MALE VOICE

As mentioned in the introduction, there are three primary male voice types: bass, baritone, and tenor. Each of the categories has a unique *zona di passaggio*. This zone of passage is the range of pitches, roughly a fourth, encompassed by the first and second passaggi. Where the passaggi and zone of passage occur in each voice is dependent upon the range of each register. The range of each register is, in turn, dependent upon the size of the larynx and the strength of the muscles of phonation. In this preliminary classification of voices, it is the range of the registers that matter; specifically, the upper limit of the chest voice and the lower limit of the falsetto. Overall range becomes more important as the voice develops and the student's *fach* comes into consideration.

Recognition of either register's pivot point¹³ suffices as one generally knows where to expect the other to appear. The safest way to assess a student's register breaks is to have the student begin phonation in a comfortably low range (about D₃) at low volume and slowly ascend in pitch by half-steps while maintaining the dynamic level (an increase in breath energy or volume must be resisted in order for the assessment to be accurate—encouraging the student to “let” his voice break can be helpful). The point at which this soft sound breaks into a falsetto timbre usually corresponds with the first passaggio. Confirmation should be obtained, though, by repeating the exercise at a comfortable forte (maintained throughout the rising half-step scale). The teacher should mark the place at which the timbre changes noticeably into a “yell”

¹³ Pivot point, *passaggio*, and register event are used interchangeably.

quality. This change in timbre should be easily audible and, in some cases, visible, as the singer may lift the chin (and, subsequently, the larynx) in an effort to maintain the higher pitches.

This event should correspond to the pivot point noticed in the softer exercise. The student should continue up the scale (still at a comfortable forte) until the voice is forced to flip into the falsetto register. This point will denote the second passaggio. The ability to sing beyond the first passaggio (without resorting to the lifted larynx that causes the “yell” timbre) and beyond the second passaggio (without resorting to the falsetto register) lies in the development of the coordinated action of the thyro-arytenoid muscles and the crico-thyroid muscles. This coordinated action will extend the overall range of the voice and lead to a better understanding of where the voice will fit within its own primary category.

In the first chapter of his book, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, Miller gives an excellent table of the register events for the lyric bass and lyric baritone primary types as well as the subordinate types derived from them. In *Training Tenor Voices*, Miller includes the passaggi for the tenor primary voice type and those of its subordinate categories. All in all, Miller recognizes a variety of male voice types with passaggi ranging from G₃ to A₄.

Of particular interest, in the context of this discussion, are the types ranging from lyric bass at the low end to lyric tenor at the high end. Within this range, the registration events of each primary type are separated by a minor third as follows (the first and lower pitch indicates the first passaggio while the second, higher pitch denotes the second passaggio).

Lyric bass	A-flat ₃ and D-flat ₄
Lyric baritone	B ₃ and E ₄
Lyric tenor	D ₄ and G ₄

The two pitches that form the gap between the lyric bass and the lyric baritone are designated as registration events of the hybrid voice, the bass-baritone, and a subcategory of the baritone, the dramatic baritone (sometimes called a Verdi baritone¹⁴ or a Heldenbariton¹⁵).

Bass-baritone	A ₃ and D ₄
Dramatic baritone	B-flat ₃ and E-flat ₄

The gap between the lyric baritone and the lyric tenor is also comprised of two pitches, but, interestingly, both these pitches are designated as registration events of subcategories of the tenor voice.¹⁶

Dramatic tenor	C ₄ and F ₄
Spinto Tenor	C-sharp ₄ and F-sharp ₄

Registration events alone, though, are not enough to classify a voice. Doscher notes:

Tessitura and the careful monitoring of bridges between registers [passaggi] is the most viable way to classify young voices. Classification becomes a tentative rather than a definitive assessment, is always under consideration, and is subject to change as circumstances warrant.¹⁷

Further evidence is offered by Miller's admission that the Heldentenor's registration events may vary widely, from B-flat₃ and E-flat₄ to C₄ and F₄. These passaggi also coincide with those of the dramatic baritone, lyric baritone, and dramatic tenor. In this event it becomes necessary for the teacher to combine knowledge of registration events with timbre, tessitura, and range in order to determine the direction of early training and the likely categorical outcome of a student's vocal study (though flexibility in these prophetic assumptions is paramount).

¹⁴ Richard Miller, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, 9-10.

¹⁵ Richard Miller, *Training Tenor Voices* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁷ Doscher, 197.

In the case of voices whose registration events lie at C₄ and F₄, there are at least two recognized category designations, and they are both tenors. The issue is clouded even further when one considers that these voices usually begin their training as baritones. So, for baritones who grow up to become tenors and potential tenors who wind up being light baritones, the use of the hybrid label, baritenor, would be especially apropos in their early training.

In categorizing student voices teachers must recognize 1) the most likely primary type to which the voice may belong by exploring its registration events, and 2) the voice's potential for a categorization other than the primary (lyric) type, depending on the specific pitches of the singer's passaggi, the range and tessitura of the voice, and the timbre of the voice in its chest register and head voice (the coordinated action of the thyro-arytenoid muscles and crico-thyroid muscles). In the case of dramatic types (a defining characteristic of these types often being a heavy muscular production), the teacher should eschew the placement of the voice into a subcategory until some training has been accomplished (particularly the coordinated action that produces the head voice) since the early use of a heavy, dark production is often artificial (due to the student's conception of what his voice should sound like or the type of training received in his early vocal studies) and can be detrimental to the development of balanced registration.

Doscher explains,

Timbre is undoubtedly a better estimator of classification than range. Since timbre is so closely related to formant frequencies [the partials accessed by varying configurations of the vocal tract], it should give some indication of the size and dimensions of the vocal tract. At the same time, timbre is determined to a great extent by the particular method of voice training. A young baritone who sings with a very dark color, i.e., emphasis on the lower harmonics, may very well have first formant frequencies of a bass, regardless of what his natural vocal timbre may be.¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid., 196.

Vocal subcategories, though, should be considered before the voice has reached its full capacity because the eventual professional viability of the sound is very definitely a goal of vocal training (this goal is secondary to the freedom of the instrument itself—the teacher should focus not only on developing the head voice in male singers but also on encouraging the exploration of the full range of the natural tendencies of all voices).

From a training perspective, the hybrid labels (bass-baritone and baritenor), if deemed appropriate by the teacher, are particularly useful. Both visually and mentally, they convey to the student the idea that his voice possesses inherent qualities associated with both primary types included in his hybrid designation. The use of these hybrid labels also encourages the full development and exploration of these seemingly disparate qualities, whereas, early designation as a primary (lyric) type may encourage the neglect of one part of the voice in preference to another. Miller observes, “Yet there is a danger that the baritenor may settle on the baritone category without having sufficiently explored other possibilities. Many a potential tenor has been falsely classified as a baritone simply because his upper voice remained unexplored.”¹⁹ Doscher makes the same point in relation to the frustrations of retraining and potential damage to voices that are misclassified,

If a young female has a naturally darker singing voice than her peers, she is generally classified as a mezzo. Many a big-voiced soprano has sung as a mezzo into her mid-20’s, only to find that her voice was misclassified. The retraining period can be extended and frustrating because the upper third of her voice has been inactive for so long. As a result, sometimes the voice never reaches its full potential. The sad thing about this kind of classification by timbre alone is that the rare voices, such as the spinto soprano and the dramatic tenor, are the ones most often misclassified. At best, their potential is never realized; at worst, permanent vocal damage results.²⁰

¹⁹ Miller, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, 11.

²⁰ Doscher, 196-197.

Of course, damage to the voice may also occur in the case of singers who commit to a specialized subcategory prematurely. Baritones who are misclassified as some type of tenor may damage the vocal cords in an attempt to extend the chest register beyond the second passaggio. Tenors without a reliable upper extension may be misclassified as baritones and cause damage by attempting to establish the validity of the lower voice through a heavy, dark production that is not natural to the instrument. In both cases, the damage is a result of the regular and extensive over-tensing of the thyro-arytenoid muscles which are primarily responsible for the production of the chest register; hence, the importance of the recognition of a second hybrid voice category among male singers.

THE BARITENOR

In *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, Miller briefly acknowledges the legitimacy of the baritenor as a transient vocal category.

The registration occurrences of yet another common category of young male voice must be mentioned: the classical singer whose passage zone lies between C₄ and F₄. This type of voice has been described, usually pejoratively, as a *baritenor*, because initially there may be difficulty in determining whether the singer should be trained as a tenor or a baritone. Such singers are sometimes termed “second tenors,” or even “A-flat tenors.”²¹

Though Miller states that male voice classification is contingent upon the location of registration events,²² there is obviously some doubt in the matter. As observed earlier in this paper, registration events alone are not enough for the categorization of some voices. If teachers have a difficult time discerning the primary type (baritone or tenor) of a student’s voice despite the registration events that lie beyond those of the baritone (B₃ and E₄), it seems obvious that other factors must be considered. To reinforce this point, one should note that Miller goes on to say,

The C₄–F₄ pivotal *zona di passaggio* of an individual singer may indicate several viable possibilities: (1) a light lyric baritone, (2) a *Spieltenor* (an actor/tenor), or (3) a *Heldentenor* (*tenore robusto*). These categories are defined by widely disparate physical characteristics, yet all tend to display similar registration locations.²³

This seems to suggest that any given vocal category may actually encompass more than one set of registration events, furthering the idea that timbre, tessitura, and range play a significant role in vocal categorization. That role becomes even more significant when confronted with a voice

²¹ Miller, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, 10.

²² *Ibid.*, 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

that exhibits the registration events of one type but possesses the timbre and tessitura of an adjacent type.

From a teaching perspective, Miller notes,

A singer whose *zona di passaggio* lodges between C₄ and F₄ would be well advised to adhere to the lyric baritone literature during early training. He should not too soon attempt the higher-lying tenor repertoire that may later become appropriate.²⁴

While I find this to be excellent advice, I believe it is incomplete.

For baritenors who display range limitations that preclude the exploration of the tenor repertoire in early training, the baritone repertoire is certainly an appropriate place to start. This repertoire, though, should not be limited to that of the *lyric* baritone but should also include selections from the comic baritone repertoire as well, such as Papageno in *The Magic Flute*. On the other hand, for baritenors whose natural tendencies (timbre and tessitura, specifically) are more like those of a true tenor, there is plenty of “second tenor” repertoire available for the exploration of the upper register without doing too much, too soon, i.e. Nemorino’s aria “Quanto è bella” in Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore*.

Miller also remarks, “Much of the standard song literature lodges comfortably for the medium-ranged voice – thus is ideal for the baritenor.”²⁵ Indeed, this literature provides a wealth of opportunity for the baritenor to explore all his timbre and range capabilities as the key of most art songs is not fixed as in operatic repertoire. With art songs that are not part of a cycle and when songs are performed as an excerpt from a cycle, it is not uncommon for a singer to make selections from both the high voice editions and the low voice editions (of course, this can only be done when the progression of keys is not an issue).

²⁴ Ibid., 11.

²⁵ Ibid.

One of the last observations Miller makes about the baritenor voice is also one of the most interesting: “When the baritenor’s technical production becomes sufficiently stable, his instrument will reveal its true permanent category.”²⁶ This statement is so vague that it almost has an air of mystical alchemy about it and certainly suggests some degree of fluidity in the occurrence of registration events among voice types. While I agree with the idea that technical stability and the freedom of the instrument should be the first goals of a voice teacher, that freedom and stability will necessarily touch upon the issues of range, tessitura, and timbre. Accepting that the registration events of the baritenor *usually* lie at C₄ and F₄, the concepts of timbre, range, and tessitura must be addressed along with the stabilization of technical production. All these things go hand in hand and must be considered a cohesive whole in order to truly develop the baritenor voice, whether it grows up to become a baritone, a tenor, or, exactly what it is, a baritenor.

²⁶ Ibid.

REPERTOIRE²⁷

This section of the document examines selected repertoire from classical art song literature and opera and oratorio arias. These selections address a variety of developmental issues in the baritenor voice. Many are also appropriate for the mature baritenor. Since issues of range and tessitura are often the deciding factors in the designation of this voice as a subcategory of the tenor primary type, a baritone, or a baritenor, the repertoire considered here includes a variety of closely related tessituras and ranges in an effort to explore both the baritone and tenor vocal expectations.

Each selection will be discussed in terms of range, tessitura, timbre,²⁸ and its usefulness to the technical development of the voice. These technical issues will include the approach to the first passaggio, singing in the zone of passage, and singing above the second passaggio. The composer's setting of vowels in these crucial areas will also be considered. Other topics may include vowel modification, resonance adjustment, and the use of breath, as all these issues are crucial to the successful development of a polished, unified professional sound.

²⁷ The repertoire presented here is but one small part of a wide spectrum of musical works and focuses on traditional classical vocal production. Much fine music exists that is applicable to the baritenor voice but lies outside the scope of this discussion.

²⁸ As it is the baritenor voice for which this repertoire is intended, registration events will be considered in the following terms: the first passaggio at C₄ and the second passaggio at F₄ with the zone of passage comprising the area between them.

ART SONG SELECTIONS

Chanson Romanesque from *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*

Composer: Maurice Ravel

Poet: Paul Morand

Key: B-flat major

Range: B-flat₂ - F₄

Tessitura: E-flat₃ - E-flat₄

Timbre

This first song in the three-song set has a light yet serious note to the musical setting. It features a Spanish dance rhythm that reflects the milieu of the character and a sparseness of accompaniment that highlights the sensual and heroic nature of the vocal line. The vocal phrases are short (usually two measures) which allows the singer plenty of time to breathe and focus on the required legato. The overall timbre of the piece is traditionally that of the baritone or even the bass, but the baritenor should not artificially darken his sound, as the song is a dramatic yet tender declaration of love.

Passaggi

As the tessitura of the piece shows, this song is useful in developing a sustained sound just above and below the first passaggio. The first instance of launching into the first passaggio

occurs in measure 9 where Ravel requires that the voice leap to the C₄, continue to the E-flat₄ above, and descend again to rest finally just below the first passaggio on B-flat₃ (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1

Je lui dépêche .rais Pan . ça:

This pattern of sustained singing below the first passaggio with sudden leaps into the zone of passage is featured throughout the song, as seen in measures 19–23. In measure 19 the singer must actually enter above the first passaggio on D-flat₄ and, through a series of sequences, repeatedly weave his way above and below that first pivot point (Ex. 2).

Ex. 2

vous me di.siez que l'en .nuï Vous vient du ciel trop fleu.ri d'as . tres, Dé . chi.rant les di .vins ca .

The most challenging part of the song is the F₄ on [e] in measure 19 followed by the F₄ on [y] in measure 20 (Ex. 2). Effective handling of the second passaggio, as well as the approach, is crucial to the development and exploration of the upper extension. The low B-flats (B-flat₂) that feature prominently in the second half of the song also make it an excellent exercise in pacing and range extension (Ex. 3).

Ex. 3

qu'a vous, ma blâ . me . sant.

Vowels

When making the leaps required, it is useful for the singer to bear in the mind the forward placement of most French vowels. The baritenor should allow that placement to assist in resisting the tendency to open the mouth overmuch in the top half of the zone of passage. Ravel's setting of the text should help in this endeavor. Most of the vowels placed in the zone of passage are the closed, tongue vowels, [i] and [e], and the slightly more open, [ɛ]. The accurate formation of these vowels and their placement should come easily to the baritenor because they do not venture beyond the second passaggio.

Ma vie a son secret

Composer: Georges Bizet

Poet: Felix Arvers

Key: F major

Range: C₃ - A₄

Tessitura: A₃ - F₄

Timbre

As the tessitura and upper extension required for this song may suggest, it is best suited to those baritenors with the ability to access the brighter timbre associated with the tenor. The dynamics, though, require that the singer is not only capable of a bright, full-voiced ringing tone at the second passaggio and above but also capable of transitioning into it from a warm, dark, piano sound at the first passaggio.

Passaggi

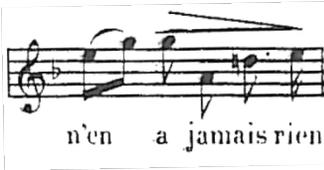
This song is truly a study in register transitions. The first half consists of four eight-measure phrases (though Bizet allows the singer plenty of time to breathe). The first phrase reaches the second passaggio, F₄, in measure 8 and quickly descends to a sustained C₃ (Ex. 4).

Ex. 4



The second phrase's high point is G₄ (bypassing the F₄) in measure 17 (Ex. 5).

Ex. 5



The third phrase features sustained singing at and below the first passaggio before revisiting the F₄. The fourth phrase, though, is probably the most difficult. The singer must enter at F₄ and sing through G₄; then, breathe, reenter on G₄, and end with a sustained, full-voiced A₄ (Ex. 6).

Ex. 6



The successful negotiation of the zone of passage and sustained notes on the second pivot point requires energetic and efficient breath support. The repeated register transitions, the bright timbre needed to access the range beyond the second passaggio, and the delicate balance required between cord tension and breath pressure make this song ideal for the development of the true baritenor.

Vowels

Because this song lies high in the voice and regularly crosses the second passaggio, some vowel modification will be necessary. The G₄ in measure 17 is set beautifully by Bizet, a bright [a], and does not require a great deal of modification (Ex. 5). The same note in measure 30, though, may need to migrate from [ɛ] to [e] to maintain flexibility and tuning (Ex. 6). Likewise, the vowel on the downbeat of the next measure should not be too open as the slimming of the

vowel is necessary in navigating the second passaggio in preparation for the sustained A₄ on [e].
If the [ɛ] vowels on the G₄'s in measures 62 and 63 follow the same pattern, the [a] vowel on the final A₄ will prove to be accessible (Ex. 7).

Ex. 7



The musical notation for Ex. 7 is a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a half note on G4 (G-clef) with the lyric "d'el - le:". This is followed by a quarter rest. The next measure starts with a dynamic marking *f* and a tempo marking *allargando*. The melody consists of quarter notes on G4, A4, B4, and C5, with lyrics "«Quelle est donc cette fem -". The final measure features a sustained A4 note with the lyric "- me?»".

Amarilli, mia bella from *Le nuove musiche*

Composer: Giulio Caccini

Poet: Giovanni Battista Guarini

Key: G minor

Range: D₃ - E₄

Tessitura: G₃ - D₄

Timbre

Because this song is in a minor key, the baritenor needs to balance carefully the bright and dark sounds natural to his voice. He should also focus on attaining the light production expected in early Italian art song and should resist the tendency to allow his production to become too heavy simply because the range of the song is not extensive. This is especially important at the end of the song when the singer is asked to begin the phrase on a pianissimo D₄ and crescendo into the E₄ above (Ex. 8).

Ex. 8



Lightness and agility must always be the goal as the composer saves the most difficult passage for the end of the song, the melisma on the second syllable of "amore" (Ex. 9).

Ex. 9



but provides excellent guidance in the principles that must be mastered and applied to that era of music. The peaks of phrases employ the [a], [ɛ], and [i] vowels (Ex. 10 and Ex. 11).

Ex. 11

The image shows two musical staves in G major. The first staff begins with a forte (f) dynamic marking and contains the notes A4, G4, and F4, with lyrics 'A - pri-mi il'. The second staff begins with a 'più cresc.' dynamic marking and contains the notes A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, and G4, with lyrics 'A-ma - ril - li è il mio a -'. The lyrics are hyphenated across the notes.

In the [a] vowels, the singer should maintain a forward placement while the [ɛ] vowels modify to a slightly more closed position resembling that of the [e] vowel. Modification of the [i] vowel will depend on the innate quality of the singer's timbre. In the case of a tenor timbre, it is appropriate to sing an absolutely pure [i] vowel, whereas, the baritenor with a baritone timbre must modify the vowel toward the more open version, the [ɪ] vowel. Recognition of this adjustment becomes especially important in measure 45 when the [i] vowel on E₄ must be approached from a pianissimo [a] vowel on D₄ (Ex. 8).

Nina

Composer: Giovanni Pergolesi

Poet: Anonymous

Key: G minor

Range: F₃ - G₄

Tessitura: B-flat₃ - F₄

Timbre

In the key of G-minor, this song is useful to the baritenor whose voice resembles that of a tenor. It provides some freedom in exploring a slightly dark timbre in the opening phrases which peak twice, first, above the second passaggio on a G₄, and then, on the second passaggio at F₄. This dark timbre is contrasted with a brighter sound in the brief but beautiful middle section in B-flat major. Not only should the timbre be brighter in this section because it is in a major key, but also because the word “svegliate” begins the second and third phrases of the section. In both phrases, the first two syllables are on F₄ and the third syllable crosses the second passaggio to the G₄ (Ex. 13). These two phrases also need to be of contrasting dynamics: the first, piano, and the second, forte. The need for piano singing at and above the second passaggio highlights the necessity of slimming the vowel, an adjustment that will result in a brighter timbre. The final section of the song, which returns to G-minor, should not be as dark as the opening section because it features the command, “svegliate mia Ninetta.” This command should be delivered with a ringing tenor timbre, as its translation is “waken my little Nina,” but the singer needs to be sure his production is agile enough to execute the following grace notes and triplet ornamentation. A bright timbre is also necessary because the last phrase of the song requires an

Ex. 14

Musical notation for Ex. 14, showing a rising scale in G major. The lyrics are: sve-glia-te mia Ni-net - ta, sve-glia-te mia Ni-net - ta, ac -

The singer must take special care in the onset of the last phrase (at G₄) and be careful not to over open the vowel on the final F₄ because it is easy for this note to become a shout (Ex. 15).

Ex. 15

Musical notation for Ex. 15, showing dynamics (f, pp) and lyrics: più, ac - ciò non dor - - ma più.

Vowels

The most important vowels of this song are those at the second passaggio and those in the zone of passage. For the most part, the composer chose very singer-friendly vowels: [i], [e], and [a]. The adjustment of the [a] vowel is the most crucial, as this vowel at the second passaggio can become too dark in the baritenor's voice thus impeding the transition to the G₄. The [a] vowels in measures 12 and 14 should borrow a feeling of forward placement from the preceding [e] since the singer must then rise to the G₄ on an [e] vowel (Ex. 13). The same is true for the [a] vowels that are a part of the rising scale in measures 20 and 22 (Ex. 14). The scariest [a] vowel is the naked onset in measure 25, which is preceded by the dark vowel [u] (Ex. 15). The natural brightness of true Italian vowels should help but it may be necessary to mix them with the English vowel, [æ].

Lachen und Weinen

Composer: Franz Schubert

Poet: Friedrich Rückert

Key: A-flat major

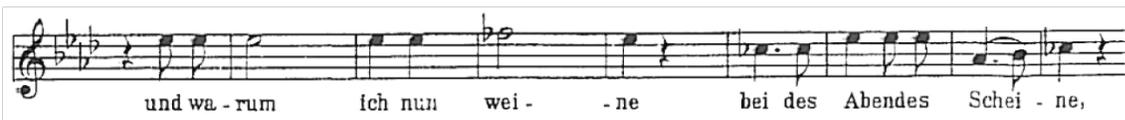
Range: E-flat₃ - G-flat₄

Tessitura: A-flat₃ - F₄

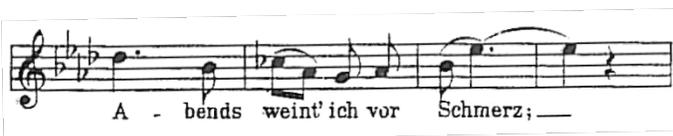
Timbre

This song requires alternating bright and dark production, though the shift from one to the other should be subtle. The use of a slightly dark baritone timbre in measures 22-30 is very effective in communicating the emotion of the text as it is in these measures that Schubert sets the part of the text that speaks of crying (Ex. 16). The same is true of measures 57-60 (Ex. 17).

Ex. 16



Ex. 17

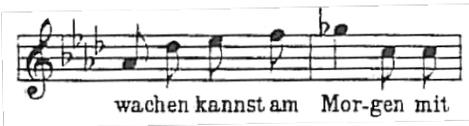


The rest of the song should feature the bright timbre of a tenor. The rhythmic setting of the text paired with the fleetness of the tempo immediately communicates a sense of the frivolity of the subject matter and the mercurial nature of human emotion. A consistently bright timbre will help maintain the lively nature of the vocal line and reflect the youthfulness of the character.

Passaggi

This song is a study in singing in the zone of passage with great agility. The melodic line requires quick alternating leaps and stepwise motion to be executed within the zone of passage. The only sustained singing required is in measures 22-30 (Ex. 16), and it is safely within and below the zone of passage. Only once does the song's melodic line go beyond the second passaggio. In measures 63 and 64 the singer must execute a rising line from D-flat₄ to G-flat₄ and, due to the tempo, must execute this register transition very quickly (Ex. 18).

Ex. 18



Vowels

German, much like English, has a wide variety of vowel colors and subtle shadings that exceed those of the romance languages (with the possible exception of French). This variety should be exploited in the exploration of this song. In measure 9 (the vocal entrance) the singer must leap from the first passaggio to the second on the first syllable of "lachen" and should employ the [a] vowel (Ex. 19).

Ex. 19



In measure 13, he must make the same leap but this time on the [u] vowel and may require some subtle spatial adjustment. The vowel must begin in the closed position and then open slightly to accommodate the resonance required by the F₄ (Ex. 20).

Ex. 20



The other vowel of note is the [ɔ] on the G-flat₄ (Ex. 18). The singer should be sure to define this vowel cleanly as its natural vocal placement, more open than the [o] vowel but not as open as the [a] vowel, is quite effective above the second passaggio.

Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen

Composer: Johannes Brahms

Poet: Georg Daumer

Key: F minor

Range: E-flat₃ - G-flat₄

Tessitura: F₃ - F₄

Timbre

In contrast to Schubert's setting of "Lachen und Weinen," this song allows the baritenor to explore the subtle shadings of a dark sound. The accompaniment evinces a feeling of heaviness and despair that is reflected in the text. The subject is love, and the character is a pessimist wallowing in desperate fear of the outcome of his declaration of devotion. A ringing tone shaded by a slight covering adjustment is very useful in communicating this desperation (rounding of the vowels should be enough).

The use of breath is also an important consideration. In the A sections, the phrases are rather short and provide an excellent opportunity to experiment with a slightly diffuse, breathy sound entirely appropriate to the character's mental state. The use of this sound also sets up a dramatic contrast to the color needed in the B section. It is in this section that the singer makes his declaration of love, and the vocal line reaches its most dramatic peak. Simply removing the slightly dark adjustment and singing accurate vowels will result in the timbre shift desired.

To lie flat on the back

Composer: Benjamin Britten

Poet: W. H. Auden

Key: C major

Range: C₃ - G₄

Tessitura: E₃ - E₄

Timbre

This song opens with text that describes and communicates an attitude of relaxation and contentment. Britten sets the text brilliantly by employing melodic lines that rise and fall very quickly, reminiscent of sighs. The singer's natural timbre, whether dark or bright, is appropriate to the opening section. For the sake of contrast, though, it behooves the singer to lean toward a forward production. The vocal peak of the song at G₄ in measure 21 marks the timbre turning point (Ex. 23).

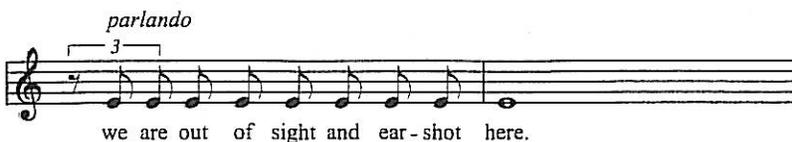
Ex. 23



Musical notation for Ex. 23, showing a vocal line in treble clef. The tempo/mood is marked "a tempo - largamente" and "legato ed espress.". The dynamics are marked "f". The melody starts with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and then continues with a series of notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) that rise and then fall. The lyrics are "There ___ is the cas - - - - - u - al".

At the next vocal entrance the composer indicates the use of a spoken quality, parlando, on a single pitch and it is at this point that the song develops a distinctly sexual feel (Ex. 24).

Ex. 24



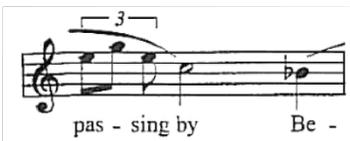
Musical notation for Ex. 24, showing a vocal line in treble clef. The tempo/mood is marked "parlando". The melody consists of a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by a series of notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) on a single pitch. The lyrics are "we are out of sight and ear-shot here."

In addition to the parlando quality, the singer should make use of a slightly muted, covered sound in an effort to convey the secret, risky nature of the relationship between the character and his companion.

Passaggi

The second passaggio and the area above are certainly technical concerns in this song but, equally important, are the numerous instances of sustained E_4 's. This note serves as the peak for several phrases and, as such, requires vibrancy and freedom. The use of an open, uninhibited sound not only facilitates the technical production but also reflects the delighted contentment of casual observation. The F_4 also serves as the acme of a couple of phrases and requires deliberate resonance adjustment. The subtlety of these adjustments becomes even more important when the vocal line subsequently crosses the second passaggio to the G_4 in measure 13 (Ex. 25) and measure 21 (Ex. 23).

Ex. 25



The final, pianissimo E_4 on the word “why” provides an excellent opportunity for the development of reinforced falsetto (Ex. 26).

Ex. 26



Like the true falsetto, the note should sound tremulous and uncertain but should also possess a fierce intensity that demands an answer and leaves the listener hanging. This feat is accomplished by stabilizing the larynx (through a slight lowering), intensifying the breath pressure, and maintaining a forward edge in the color of the vowel.

Vowels

The most difficult vowel is also the most instructive. The G₄'s in this song present a particular challenge to the baritenor, as they feature the [æ] vowel (Ex. 23 and Ex. 25). The baritenor will find this combination of pitch and vowel useful to his development in that it requires a rounded adjustment not necessary from the true tenor. Vowel definition on the F₄'s that precede and follow the G₄ in measure 13 should not be overlooked. In measure 12 the singer must execute an [i] which leads into an [ɛ] followed by the [æ] on G₄. The final adjustment needed to execute the [æ] vowel should be anticipated in the color of the [i] and [ɛ] without compromising their clarity (Ex. 27).

Ex. 27

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line. The tempo is marked "a tempo (con spirito)". The score includes two triplets of eighth notes, each marked with a "3" and a slur. The lyrics are: "good to see them pas - sing by Be - low on the white side - walk in the heat, The". The final note is marked with "pp".

Youth, Day, Old Age, and Night

Composer: Ned Rorem

Poet: Walt Whitman

Key: D major/B-flat major

Range: D₃ - A₄

Tessitura: G₃ - E-flat₄

Timbre

This beautiful setting of Walt Whitman's poem features a timbre duality suggested by the title. The song is structured in four sections, which alternate between D major and B-flat major. The first section should have a bright, ringing tone reminiscent of the qualities of youth being described. This bright timbre, though, should not be associated with a lightness of production—this section should be sung with a full, exuberant sound. The second section, featuring old age, should contrast with the opening section in both timbre and volume. The baritenor should be cautious not to adjust his resonance too much, though, as the transition to B-flat major and the change in dynamics provide sufficient contrast. Vocal production in this section should be focused on attaining a light, heady sound throughout the zone of passage. Section three (day) should parallel the first section and section four (night), the second.

Passaggi

The first section employs the leap of a major sixth to reach its highest point, F-sharp₄. The challenge is approaching this note with a full sound while maintaining a feeling of freedom by resisting the inclination to lift the chin and/or larynx (Ex. 28).

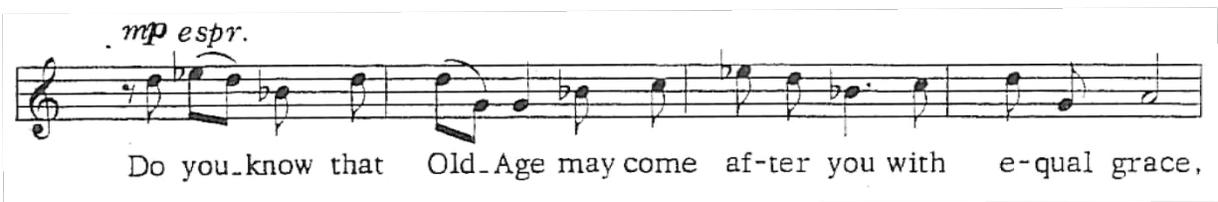
Ex. 28



Ex. 28 shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are "youth full of grace, force, fas-ci-na-tion,". There are slurs over the phrases "full of grace," and "force, fas-ci-na-tion,".

The second section requires light, legato singing in the zone of passage thus making it an excellent study in the controlled coordination of registers (Ex. 29).

Ex. 29



Ex. 29 shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are "Do you know that Old Age may come af-ter you with e-qual grace,". The dynamic marking *mp espr.* is written above the staff.

The third section includes the highest reaches of the song, peaking at A₄. Like the first section, handling of the leap to F-sharp₄ is crucial. This is especially true since, in this section, the F-sharp₄ begins a stepwise pattern that rises to the A₄ (Ex. 30).

Ex. 30



Ex. 30 shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are "day of the im-mense sun, _____". There is a slur over the phrase "im-mense sun,".

In the last section the focus should be on the head voice in the zone of passage as this section features the lowest point in the song, C₃. An intensification of breath energy is necessary in the descending minor seventh from B-flat₃ to C₃ so the note is not lost in the piano's sound and the intensity should be maintained through the final note, D₃ (Ex. 31).

OPERATIC/ORATORIO REPERTOIRE

Operatic and oratorio arias are very useful in exploring the possibilities of the baritenor voice. In this repertoire, it may seem that the lines are more clearly drawn in what can and cannot be sung by any given voice type, but they are only truly defined by the ability of the singer and his willingness to wear different labels. In the classical, professional world of theatrical performance, some stigma is often attached to a singer whose voice does not fit the labels currently in usage. A persevering spirit and true appreciation for the artistry required in playing a supporting role are absolutely necessary for the mature baritenor who plans to have a career on the classical theatrical stage.

All of the repertoire featured in this section is intended for use in the exploration of the possibilities engendered by possessing a baritenor voice. Some of these voices may mature into tenors of some type and find themselves singing the entire roles represented by these excerpts; while others may settle into the baritone category, lyric or otherwise, and find themselves eschewing the tenor roles for those of the baritone. In any case, these arias are meant to explore the inherent possibilities of the baritenor and may certainly be sung as excerpts in a concert or recital.

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted from *Messiah*

Composer: George F. Handel

Key: E major

Range: E₃ - G-sharp₄

Tessitura: G₃ - E₄

Timbre

This aria is perfect for a baritenor exploring the timbre and agility required of the true tenor. Initially, his production may be too heavy or dark to execute successfully the demanding fioritura, but the aria is an excellent study in lightening the vocal production while not demanding the full upper extension of a tenor. Lightening of the vocal production should coincide with experimentation in the forward placement of vowels in order to achieve a uniformly bright timbre while negotiating the zone of passage and the area above the second passaggio. The only appropriate places for a (very subtle) darker timbre are the settings of the word, “crooked,” and this shading is conveniently aided by the [ʊ] vowel.

Passaggi

Since this aria is typically associated with the tenor voice by virtue of its rhythmic character and virtuosic navigation of the middle and upper voice, the baritenor needs to adjust the coordination between registers. He needs to anticipate register transitions, and, possibly, initiate the transition well before the expected pivot point. Take, for example, the melisma on “exalted” in measures 14-19. The baritenor may begin making his transition as early as measure

17, whereas, the tenor may not need the adjustment until the end of measure 18 on the F-sharp₄ or measure 19 on the G-sharp₄ itself (Ex. 32).

Ex. 32



While these notes above the second passaggio deserve special attention, the baritenor's focus should be the mastery of E₄, as this note is the gateway to the upper register. For true tenors, E₄ is usually a “given” in their zone of passage; thus, it does not require the same degree of adjustment.

Vowels

For baritenors, the prominence of E₄ is an especial challenge due to the variety of vowels required: [æ], [i], [ε], [u], and [ə], just to name a few. The singer should approach each vowel with the proper resonance balance in mind. Bright, forward vowels should be rounded and dark, back vowels should be opened, with particular attention to their focus. Experimentation in degrees of modification is encouraged.

It is enough from *Elijah*

Composer: Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Key: F-sharp minor

Range: A₂ - E₄

Tessitura: F-sharp₃ - D₄

Timbre

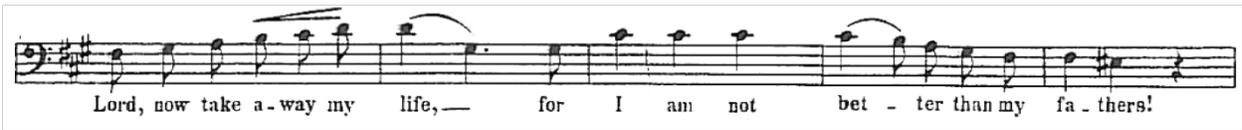
This aria is considered a part of the baritone repertoire and should reflect that in the vocal color employed. The baritenor, depending on his natural timbre, may need to make some small adjustments in resonance at the first passaggio so the notes in the zone of passage do not become too bright, especially the C-sharp₄ and D₄. The aria actually presents its challenges in the lower register. The baritenor must relax into the lower sound (as opposed to foisting an artificially dark sound on the voice), creating the open space necessary for the resonance of the lower notes but not allowing the focus of the voice to fall back into the same space. In the baritenor's lower register, the duality of spacious resonance and forward focus must be maintained at all times. The pathos of Elijah is also reflected in this delicate balance between dark and light sounds.

Passaggi

The area below the first passaggio and the zone of passage are of primary interest in this aria. Sustained singing in these areas with a wide spectrum of dynamics should be the focus of the baritenor's study. Whether approached by leap or step, it is crucial for the baritenor to preserve a consistent color in this part of the voice that does not compromise the relatively thick vocal cord closure required in the lower register. The singer should take this opportunity to

explore the range of tension possible for his particular instrument in the lower register while still producing a healthy, viable theatrical sound (Ex. 33 and Ex. 34).

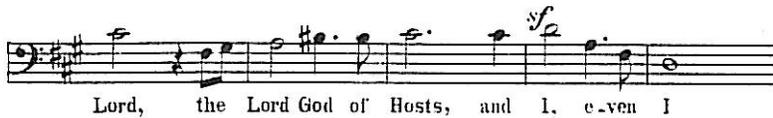
Ex. 33



Lord, now take a-way my life, — for I am not bet - ter than my fa - thers!

The musical notation for Ex. 33 is a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with a long horizontal line under the word "life," indicating a sustained note. The lyrics are: "Lord, now take a-way my life, — for I am not bet - ter than my fa - thers!"

Ex. 34



Lord, the Lord God of Hosts, and I, e-ven I

The musical notation for Ex. 34 is a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *sf* (sforzando) is placed above the second measure. The lyrics are: "Lord, the Lord God of Hosts, and I, e-ven I".

Vowels

The setting of the text features a variety of vowels just below and above the first passaggio. This aria is for the first passaggio what Handel's aria is for the second. The array of vowels offered on B₃ and C-sharp₄ makes for an excellent study. The baritenor must allow the resonance space to grow and maintain a slightly covered sound, as his voice will have a tendency to open up in the zone of passage in anticipation of what would normally be coming in tenor repertoire. Examples of this are seen throughout the aria but moments of particular note occur in measures 23-24 on [ɛ] (Ex. 35), measures 55-56 on [I], [a], and [ɛ] (Ex. 36), and measures 96-97 on [eI] (Ex. 37).

Ex. 35



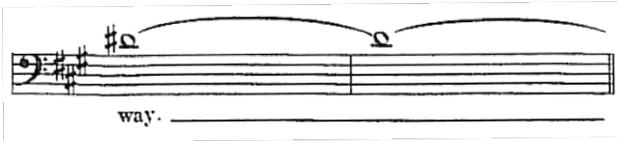
bet - ter, not bet - - - ter than my

The musical notation for Ex. 35 is a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. A slur covers the first two measures. The lyrics are: "bet - ter, not bet - - - ter than my".

Ex. 36



Ex. 37



Papageno's suicide aria from *Die Zauberflöte*

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Librettists: Emanuel Schikaneder and Carl Ludwig Giesecke

Key: G major

Range: D₃ - E₄

Tessitura: G₃ - D₄

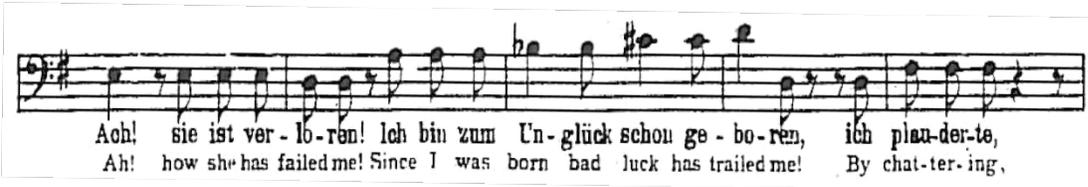
Timbre

The role of Papageno is perfect for the development of the young baritenor. This aria alternates between G major and G minor but must consistently convey a feeling of loneliness, sadness, and desperation. As such, the G major sections that dominate the aria present the peculiar challenge of coloring the middle voice to reflect the emotion while not allowing the timbre to affect the tuning. The brightest timbre of the entire aria should be employed in Papageno's reminiscences of his beloved, Papagena. The baritenor should also be wary of letting Mozart's transition to G minor trick him into using a sound that is too dark. The singer should employ the juxtaposition of opposites by focusing on a darker timbre in the major sections and a brighter timbre in the minor sections. The baritenor should also be reminded that these resonance adjustments must be subtle and never taken to extremes (except when the comedic nature of the character justifies it).

Passaggi

In this aria, the baritenor should focus on the approach to the zone of passage. Most of the singing is in this area and the challenge lies in producing a sustained sound strong enough to be heard from the stage while reflecting the buoyancy of the 6/8-meter signature (Ex. 38).

Ex. 38

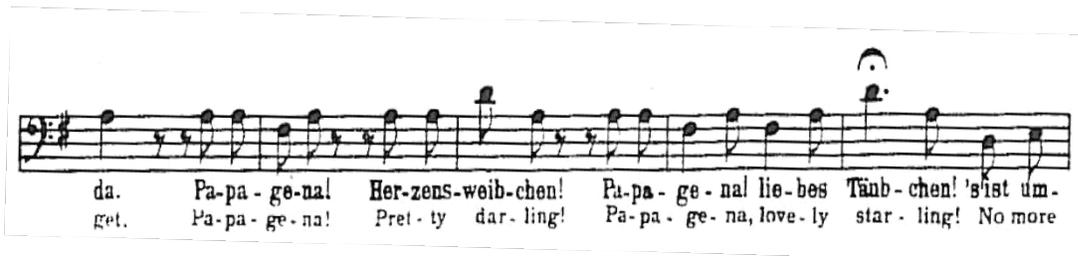


A musical score for a baritone voice in 6/8 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff in German and English.

Ach! sie ist ver-lo-ren! Ich bin zum Un-glück schon ge-bo-ren, ich plau-der-te,
Ah! how she has failed me! Since I was born bad luck has trailed me! By chat-ter-ing,

As the singer produces sustained sound in the zone of passage, it is important to maintain the coordinated muscular action of the head voice. Taking the full chest voice into this area will compromise his ability to descend into the lower voice with the presence required of theatrical singing (Ex. 39).

Ex. 39



A musical score for a baritone voice in 6/8 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff in German and English.

da. Pa-pa - ge-na! Her-zens-weib-chen! Pa-pa - ge - na! lie-bes Täub-chen! 's'ist um-
get. Pa-pa - ge - na! Pret - ty dar - ling! Pa-pa - ge - na, love - ly star - ling! No more

Vowels

Performance of this opera in English is common. Study of the aria in both English and German is encouraged not only because the student may be required to sing it in either language but also because of the drastic variety of vowels featured on the D₄, E-flat₄, and E₄ (Ex. 40).

Quanto è bella from *L'elisir d'amore*

Composer: Gaetano Donizetti

Librettist: Felice Romani

Key: C major

Range: E₃ - A₄

Tessitura: G₃ - E₄

Timbre

This aria, a part of the tenor repertoire, requires a youthful, bright sound. It provides excellent opportunities for the baritenor to explore his lighter side. The primary challenge lies in finding a forward placement and light production in the lower voice on E₃. Once this placement and production is established, the baritenor should be careful to reinstate it after singing in the open, full-voiced top. Depending on the singer's interpretation of the character, some darker timbre adjustments may be made in the delivery of the lines, "Io son sempre un idiota. Io non so che sospirar." This moment of self-doubt underlies the melodrama of the youth's perspective of love and may also be reflected in the "Ah!" on F₄ that leads into the second half of the aria. These subtle shadings of timbre are also important because the aria is a cavatina, serving as an introduction of the character to the audience.

Passaggi

The most significant passaggio consideration in this aria is the approach to the numerous E₄'s. The delicate balance of muscle coordination on these notes must be explored and

established, as they often serve as the baritenor's launch point into the area above his second passaggio (Ex. 41).

Ex. 41

Two musical staves in treble clef. The first staff shows a descending melodic line with lyrics "cor non son - ca -". The second staff shows a similar descending line with lyrics "rar. In quel cor non son ca -". Both staves feature chromatic notes and a sustained note before descending.

F₄ also deserves special consideration but the baritenor will find that he has a little more flexibility in its handling since its occurrences are usually the peak of the phrase (Ex. 42).

Ex. 42

A musical staff in treble clef with lyrics "bel - la, quan - to è". The melody features a sustained note followed by a descending chromatic line.

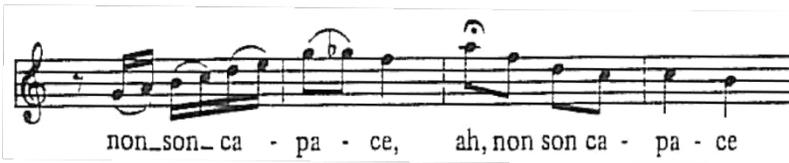
Another useful aspect of this aria is the focus it places on descending transitions through the second passaggio and the zone of passage. When a voice descends by stepwise motion, special care should always be paid to tuning and this aria is no exception. It presents the added challenge of ever-shifting balance in the coordination between the thyro-arytenoid muscles and crico-thyroid muscles. Each time the baritenor sings the sustained G₄'s he must then descend (by stepwise motion) through the second passaggio and zone of passage into the lower voice. Of special interest is the fact that these descents (and some ascents) feature chromatic notes that will prove useful in the study of tuning in the zone of passage (Ex. 41 and Ex. 43).

Ex. 43

A musical staff in treble clef with lyrics "fet - to ad in - spi -". The melody includes chromatic notes and a descending line.

The last passaggio consideration is the A₄ featured in the cadenza traditionally associated with this aria. The key to the successful negotiation of this height is the G₄ that precedes it. This peak should be carefully balanced in anticipation of the forward placement and spatial height needed for the A₄. In short, the G₄ should serve as the mental and technical gateway to the A₄ despite the intervening G-flat₄ and F₄ (Ex. 44).

Ex. 44



Vowels

The vowels featured on the E₄'s and above make this aria an excellent study in resonance balancing and exploration of the tenor tessitura. The pivotal notes are usually approached on [a] and [ɔ] vowels. For most baritenors, these vowels increase the likely success of singing at and above the second passaggio. The open, forward sound of the Italian [a] vowel is ideal for placement of the baritenor and the Italian [ɔ] should closely resemble this placement.

Largo al factotum from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*

Composer: Gioacchino Rossini

Librettist: Cesare Sterbini

Key: C major

Range: C₃ - A₄

Tessitura: G₃ - D₄

Timbre

Figaro is a role closely tied to the baritone repertoire and Rossini's music makes it a goal for many young singers. The mature singer's sound must possess the rounded warmth of a baritone for the strong, sustained singing required in the middle voice. For the baritenor, it is an excellent study in finding and maintaining that color while remaining agile enough to execute both the challenging melismatic passages and the triplet stepwise motion in the zone of passage. Throughout the aria, performance practice demands several instances of sustained singing on G₄, which provide fine opportunities for the baritenor to employ the brightness of his upper voice. The baritenor should take care in the subtle coloring necessary to achieve the sound desired in order to remain flexible enough to descend to and sustain the C₃ and D₃.

Passaggi

Most of the singing done in this aria is in the zone of passage and the area just below the first passaggio, making it ideal for baritenors. The singer should focus on maintaining a well coordinated and strong head voice sound at all times in the zone of passage. Since the vocal lines often descend after sustained singing in the zone of passage, the singer may be tempted to

take the chest voice into this area without incorporating the lighter mechanism associated with head voice. This mistake will prove fatal in his attempts to get beyond the second passaggio. Sustained singing above the second passaggio (coupled with the baritone color of the middle and lower voice) is the hallmark of this aria. Performance practice has led to the interpolation of sustained G₄'s, and, in at least two instances, A₄'s. For example, the A₃ written for the first syllable of “bravo” (Ex. 45) is traditionally sung up the octave.

Ex. 45

For - tu - na - tis - si - mo per ve - ri - tà; bra - vo!

The most difficult part of the aria, though, is the final section. This section features alternating measures of buoyant triplets and sustained dotted quarter notes in the zone of passage without crossing above the second passaggio until the penultimate vocal measure (Ex. 46).

Ex. 46

f con brio
so - no il fac - to - tum del - la__ cit -
tà, so - no il fac - to - tum del - la__ cit -
tà, del - la__ cit - tà, del - la__ cit -
tà, del la cit tà!

Accomplishing this section successfully, especially after having sung the entire aria, is no mean feat for any baritone or baritenor.

Vowels

The vowels featured above the second passaggio are fairly accessible to most baritenors. The [a] vowel lends itself well to this area of the voice but the singer should be careful to preserve a forward focus in the resonating space. The [e] vowel and [i] vowel are helpful in that they are forward vowels, but adjustments in resonating space will have to be made. These are three basic vowel sounds commonly required above the second passaggio and, as such, their occurrence in the aria make it a superb study. The famous patter section on “Ah, bravo, Figaro,” also requires excellent control of vowel formation. The challenge lies in conquering the melismas and delivering precise diction while not interfering with vowel formation, vocal placement, and overall color.

Ah, la paterna mano from *Macbeth*

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi

Librettist: Francesco Maria Piave

Key: D-flat major

Range: F₃ - A₄ (B-double flat)

Tessitura: A-flat₃ - F₄

Timbre

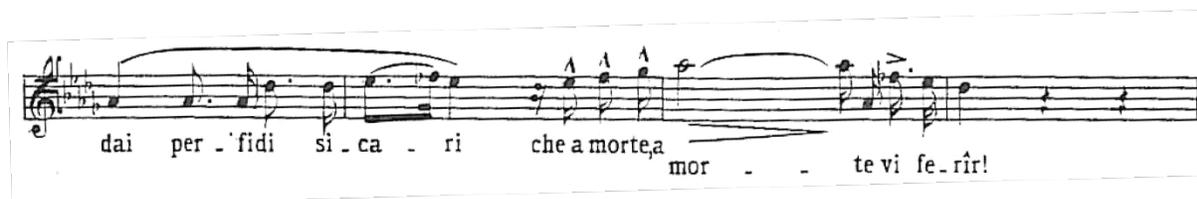
The role of Macduff is part of the tenor repertoire. The darkness of the subject matter, though, is reflected throughout the opera including the color of voices. Verdi makes modest demands on the upper extension of the tenor voice, thus, making this role ideal for the baritenor's exploration of that area. The baritenor should have little problem in finding the right timbre with which to express the emotion of the text, as his natural duality of type is well suited to it. The aria begins in D-flat minor, and the baritenor should be encouraged to express his slightly dark timbre as he laments the fate of his countrymen. The second half of the aria, in which Macduff swears vengeance, is in D-flat major, and it is then that the singer should make the transition into a brighter sound.

Passaggi

Verdi provides a variety of approaches to the second passaggio and above. The handling of D-flat₄ and E-flat₄ is crucial to accessing the top notes of the aria, as they consistently serve as the starting points of phrases that peak above F₄. The A-flat₄ in measure 8 of the aria

(approached by step) may seem to be accessed through the preceding E-flat₄, but, in fact, register transition should be initiated as early as the D-flat₄ in measure 6 (Ex. 47).

Ex. 47



Avant de quitter ces lieux from *Faust*

Composer: Charles Gounod

Librettists: Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

Key: E-flat major

Range: C₃ - G₄

Tessitura: G₃ - E-flat₄

Timbre

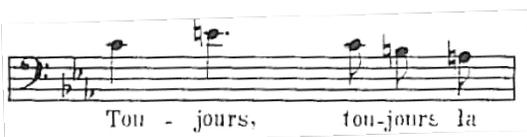
The bright lyricism associated with the French operatic repertoire for baritone makes this literature excellent for development of the baritenor voice. It also provides a variety of arias suitable for performance by the mature baritenor. In this aria, the inherent ambiguity of the baritenor's timbre is a strength. In the opening phrase (Ex. 51), the singer should employ a light, easy production with a forward focus that will allow the voice to bloom as it rises through the scale to peak, initially, at E-flat₄.

Ex. 51



Slight shading of the voice's timbre is very useful in highlighting the difference between the E₄ in measure 12 (Ex. 52) and the E-flat₄ in measure 14 (Ex. 53).

Ex. 52



Ex. 53



The quick and rangy passages in the aria's martial section require a bright timbre to be executed cleanly (Ex. 56). This timbre is also very appropriate to the text as Valentine sings of the glories of war, honor, and patriotism. At measure 30 the baritenor must be sure to implement a sudden shift to a darker color, reflecting the sudden shift from A-flat major to A-flat minor and the textual references to death (Ex. 54).

Ex. 54



Passaggi

Among baritones, this aria is famous for its stepwise approach to G₄ (Ex. 55). This approach begins on E-flat₄, the placement of which should anticipate that required by the peak at G₄.

Ex. 55



The martial section is great for developing the coordination needed in a relatively light, agile sound that always leads to a strong sustained sound in the upper voice on G-flat₄, F₄, and E-flat₄ (Ex. 56).

Ex. 56

mier, le plus brave au fort de la mê-lé-e, J'i-rai com-bat - - tre

In the final section of the aria, after successfully negotiating the G₄ on “ma,” the baritenor must maintain coordinated muscular action in the descent, as the onset of the next phrase is on G₄ approached by the leap of a ninth (Ex. 57).

Ex. 57

Ma sœur je con-fi-e! Ô Roi des

Vowels

In the lower voice, the baritenor should let the brightness of the French vowels work to his advantage. As the voice rises through the scale (and the zone of passage), the singer should let the resonance space grow but remain vigilant in focusing the vowel forward. The [a] vowel on the E-flat₄ leading to G₄, though, may require some modification toward a more central focus in anticipation of crossing the second passaggio. It may also prove useful to modify the [ɔ] vowel on E-flat₄ in measure 34 to a more closed position in order to facilitate access to a head voice placement capable of intensification throughout the sustained note (Ex. 58).

Ex. 58

Ô Margue-ri - te!

O go, go, go away from *Albert Herring*

Composer: Benjamin Britten

Librettist: Eric Crozier

Key: Various

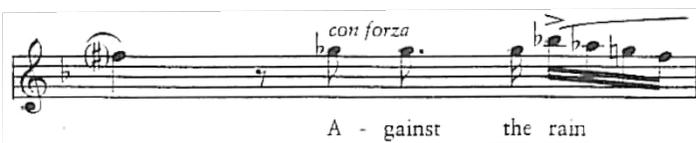
Range: D-flat₃ - B-flat₄

Tessitura: B-flat₃ - G₄

Timbre

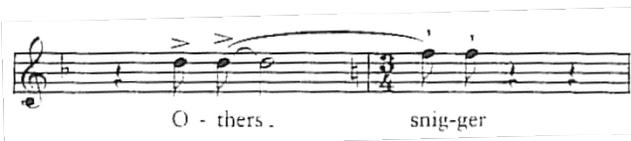
The role of Albert is part of the tenor repertoire and an effective aid in encouraging the development of a bright, young sound. This aria, though, is the most passionate of the role. As such, it should begin with a darker timbre to reflect the anger and frustration the character is experiencing. This color should be maintained until the momentary change necessary in approaching the B-flat₄ in measure 13 (Ex. 59).

Ex. 59



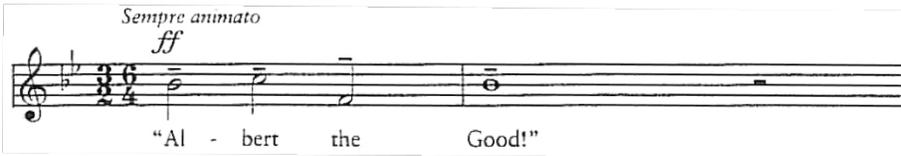
Changing to a lighter, brighter sound at measure 28 mirrors the teasing tone of “snigger” (Ex. 60) and the following section.

Ex. 60



Likewise, forward placement at measure 44 (Ex. 61) aids the baritenor in establishing the self-mocking timbre of “Albert the Good!”

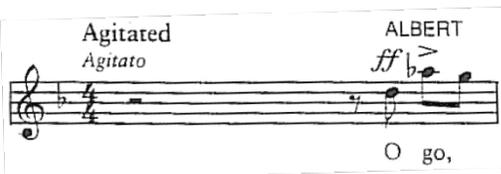
Ex. 61



Passaggi

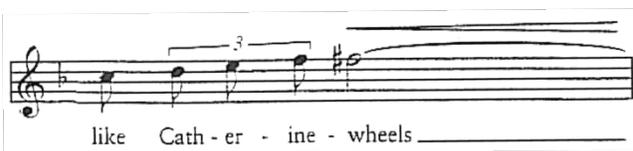
The aria’s challenges begin immediately. When it is sung as an excerpt (rather than in the context of the full role), the singer’s first interval (a rising diminished fifth) soars into a powerful, fortissimo A-flat₄ (Ex. 62); therefore, the baritenor must be sure to balance the darker timbre required by the emotions of the character with a coordinated action capable of ascending beyond the second passaggio.

Ex. 62



In approaching the F-sharp₄ on “wheels” in measure 12, the baritenor’s register transition should be initiated on the C₄ earlier in that measure (Ex. 63).

Ex. 63



Also, the singer should ensure that a slim, focused B-flat₄ is produced through the coordination and focus of this F-sharp₄. The approach to G₄ in measure 50 and A₄ in measure 52

is a special challenge in that the coordinated action of the head voice must begin below the first passaggio at B-flat₃ (Ex. 64).

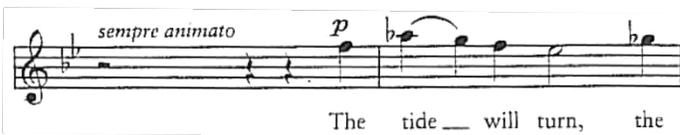
Ex. 64



Vowels

In this aria, Britten requires the singer to sustain a variety of vowels above the second passaggio. The crisp, articulate diction necessary in the British accent will help focus the voice forward in the placement of vowels, though some modification will be essential to the successful navigation of the second passaggio. For example, the B-flat₃'s in measures 50 and 52 should be spacious and resonant despite the shallow, forward [æ] vowel, while the following G₄ and A₄ should not be overly darkened through the manipulation of resonance space or the singer may have difficulty sustaining the peak notes (Ex. 64). Likewise, in the lighter 6/4 section beginning in measure 64, the baritenor must modify the English schwa of the word “the” toward a more forward placement in order to sustain the tessitura (Ex. 65).

Ex. 65



CONCLUSION

Recognition of the baritenor as a second hybrid category among male voices is an important pedagogical tool. In classifying voices, registration events must be considered in conjunction with range, tessitura, and timbre as none of these are adequate in and of themselves. Use of the baritenor label can provide security and freedom as teachers and students attempt to address the issues of vocal identity (baritone, tenor, etc.). It encourages a full exploration of timbre and range possibilities prior to final classification and allows the student to develop his unique vocal attributes without the stigma and guilt associated with having a voice that lies between the baritone and tenor primary types. It also allows the student to experiment with and develop repertoire appropriate to his individual voice. Much like the recognition of the bass-baritone, the exploration of the baritenor voice cannot help but enrich the world of vocal pedagogy by providing a niche for voices that do not fit an established mold.

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