THE DYNAMICS OF VOCAL CHAMBER MUSIC

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Vocal Chamber Music

• What is this kind of music?
• What makes it different from solo and choral singing?
• What are its musical attractions and challenges?

• A vocal chamber music course for adult soloists and experienced choral singers.
What is Vocal Chamber Music?

- The key ingredient is one singer / one player on each part.
Fresh Repertoire in Many Forms

- Vocal duets, trios, quartets
- A cappella and with piano
- Music for one singer with solo instruments: e.g. string quartet, oboe, guitar.
A Different Music Making Experience

- The solo singer becomes an ensemble singer.
- The choral singer becomes a solo singer.
• If you are a *Diva*…

• If you are only free vocally in a big chorus…

• Vocal chamber music is probably not for you.
A Social & Democratic Way of Making Music

- Ensembles of soloists are partnerships of equals.

- Generating musical momentum of performances without a conductor is an exercise in teamwork.

- Each performer, a good soloist & a good musical team member.
Just the Best!

• For many singing musicians, vocal chamber music is at or near the pinnacle of musical satisfaction.
Satisfying in Many Ways

• Interesting fresh repertoire
• The intimate scale
• Being a soloist among soloists
• The risk, the freedom, of shaping music & performing without a conductor
Musical Challenges

Singers must be able:

• to sing in tune

• to hold their part their parts in the ensemble

• to tune their voices harmonically to others

• to be aware and flexible
Chamber Music at almost Any Level

- for high school singers
• For conservatory students
Choosing Repertoire

• Is the music a good match to the singer?

• Are the singers in the ensemble a good match for each other?
Ensemble Skills: The Ideal

“Singing under one umbrella”

- Moving with the same rhythmic impulse
- Communicating non verbally
- Matching vowel color & articulation
- Breathing together & breathing to lead
Rehearsals & Coaching: The Reality

"Mrs. Porterhouse and her pianist have agreed to disagree."
Working Together is the Key

• Secure in your part, but not isolated from your partners.

• Balance and staying together becomes a shared responsibility.
Vocal Chamber Music for Adult Singers
Adult Singers Are

- Old enough to know the rules, and still young enough vocally to want to play the game
Main Goals

• To delve into the repertoire
• To experience chamber ensemble singing
• To perform in public
Course Design

- A course meeting twice/week for four weeks
- Classical Repertoire for voice & piano
- Focus on good ensemble & interpretation
- Public concert after the last class
Repertoire & Rehearsals
**Clear Structure**

Before the first class, each singer receives:

- A list of all the repertoire
- Contact information for everyone in the course
- Copies of their own ensemble pieces
- A rehearsal schedule for the first two weeks

![Rep List for Concert 7/2/13](attachment:image.png)
Weeks One & Two

- Read through all the repertoire
- Coaching to facilitate further rehearsals and practice
- Translations of all non English texts
- Choose pieces for performance
Final Two Weeks: A Challenging Time

- A new rehearsal schedule for the last two weeks
- **In class:** intense and concentrated ensemble coaching
- And rehearsing piece for performance
Taking Initiative

Outside Class:

• Ensemble singers arrange extra rehearsals with the accompanist
• Ensembles practice together more frequently on their own
• It’s concentrated, risky and fun!
Vocal Chamber Music
for Voices & Piano by
Baska, Beach, Haydn, Lang, Lehmann, Mendelssohn,
Mozart, Quilter, Schubert & Vaughan Williams

Performed by
David Barlow * Harriet Bridges * Jane Fisher Carlson
Edward Crowley * Clia Goodwin * Winifred Hentschel
* Mary Lewis * Paul Lewis * Polly Scannell
Fabienne Schmit * Richard Scott * Evelyn Spalding
&
Caroline Harvey, piano
Experienced Adult Singers

• Musically attuned
• Challenged by solo ensemble singing
• Generally responsible & resilient
• Looking for musical companionship
Vocal Chamber Music Offers

• Fresh repertoire
• Interesting musical & social challenges
• Both ensemble training and solo experience
• Musical collaboration as equals
• Vocal chamber music has the power to extend and enrich the singing life of singers.

• What role could vocal chamber music play in your musical life?

Vocal Chamber Music Concert  July 2, 2013