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# Graduate recital in choral conducting

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GRADUATE RECITAL  
IN CHORAL CONDUCTING

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Music in Conducting

Alice Reid Pruisner  
University of Northern Iowa  
December 2014

This Study by: Alice Reid Pruisner

Entitled: A Graduate Recital in Choral Conducting

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Music in Conducting

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Date Dr. John Wiles, Chair, Thesis Committee

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Date Dr. Rebecca Burkhart, Thesis Committee Member

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Date Dr. Alison Altstatt, Thesis Committee Member

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Date Dr. April Chatham-Carpenter, Interim Dean, Graduate College

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## ABSTRACT

Alice Reid Pruisner presented her graduate recital in choral conducting in four parts. The first section, presented on September 20, 2013, was J.S. Bach's sacred cantata BWV 84, *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke*, performed by UNI's Cantorei and members of the Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra. The featured soprano soloists were Michelle Joy Monroe and Lara Wasserman. The second section, presented on October 24, 2013, included selections from Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, performed by UNI's Women's Chorus and members of the Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra. The Varsity Men's Glee Club, accompanied by Jessica Schick, also performed a set of three works that evening: *Dixit Maria* by Hans Leo Hassler, *How Can I Keep From Singing?* arranged by Gwenyth Walker, and *Seeing Nellie Home* arranged by Robert Shaw and Alice Parker. The final section, presented on November 5, 2013, included a set of three works performed by UNI Singers, accompanied by Michael Gookin: *My Spirit Sang All Day* by Gerald Finzi, *If ye love me* by Thomas Tallis, and *Dixit Dominus* from W.A. Mozart's *Vesperae solennes de confessore*. The featured soloists in the Mozart were Hope Metts, MaKayla McDonald, Alex Wilkening, and Josh Ostermann. This abstract will address the historical and stylistic features of each selection, particularly those pertaining to performance practice.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750) was one of the preeminent composers, keyboardists, and pedagogues of the late Baroque era. Bach composed five complete Cantata cycles as music director of the town of Leipzig, Germany. Only three complete cycles, and fragments of the fourth and fifth cycle, are extant.<sup>1</sup> BWV 84, *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke*, was first performed on February 9, 1727. This recital performance utilized the Stuttgarter Bach-Ausgaben Carus edition. The ensemble included three first violins, two second violins, two violas, one oboe, and the continuo group.

Musicologists have long debated which keyboard instruments belong in a Bach sacred continuo group. In 1873, musicologist Philipp Spitta put forth the long-standard argument that only the organ was

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach: with their librettos in German-English Parallel Text*. Rev. and trans. Richard D. P. Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2005), 11.

acceptable as a member of the continuo group in sacred music.<sup>2</sup> Modern research indicates, instead, that a dual accompaniment of harpsichord and organ was common, perhaps with a student realizing the harpsichord part, or Bach himself conducting from the harpsichord.<sup>3</sup> However, Bach was an imminently practical musician, always composing and re-tooling his works for the available musicians and circumstances. For this recital performance, organ was impractical, so the harpsichord was used as the only keyboard instrument. A cellist accompanied the harpsichord on all movements. While this doubling is not present in all of Bach's cantatas, the practice became standard at Leipzig.<sup>4</sup> The double bass was the third instrument of this continuo group. It played during both arias and the final chorale. In Bach's works, the lowest sounding string instrument was designated the *violone*.<sup>5</sup> Bach scholars have concluded "that his instrument was consistently a large double bass sounding an octave below notated pitch."<sup>6</sup> When at Leipzig, however, Bach did not always have a *violone* player available to him, which would dictate whether or not it was included.<sup>7</sup> It is clear, however, that Bach preferred to use a *violone* player whenever available.<sup>8</sup> In conclusion, for this recital performance the continuo group consisted of harpsichord, cello, and double bass in an effort to balance the practicality of available instruments while pursuing historical accuracy.

Continuo performance practice during recitatives was a point of emphasis when preparing and performing this recital. The second movement, *Gott ist mir ja nichts schuldig*, is a *secco* recitative. The bass line in the continuo score is notated in whole notes and half notes tied together, without much use of rests. However, the performance practice of the time, as we understand it, called for the accompaniment of *secco* recitative to be short and detached.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, all continuo players shortened the bass line to a series of quarter notes. As a result, the text was more understandable, and the continuo group did not overpower the soloist.

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<sup>2</sup> Laurence Dreyfus, *Bach's Continuo Group: Players and Practices in His Vocal Works* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

Another consideration in the performance practice of recitative for this recital was the right hand keyboard realization of harmonies that do not align with a change in the bass note.<sup>10</sup> Bach scholars disagree about the treatment of such chords. On one hand, it is unlikely Bach would have written out chords he did not intend to be sounded.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, treatises of the time instructed continuo players not to duplicate the vocal line in any way. Friedrich Erhard Niedt, a German theorist who authored the 1717 treatise *Musicalische Handleitung*, wrote that the duplicating right hand chords should only be used help a singer who has become lost or confused.<sup>12</sup> For the recital performance, the soloist was imminently capable of singing without reinforcement, so the duplicating right hand chords were not sounded.

Preparing the arias required similar attention to baroque stylings. The first movement, *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke*, is in steady triple meter, and employs all the available instruments. The dotted rhythms of the main theme, the stableness of the chordal eighth note accompaniment, and the pervasive use of hemiolas to end each section all contribute to the movement's stately, almost regal, feel. Interpretation of these three elements is key during performance. When playing the main theme, the oboe and first violin should reference the articulation of the vocal part, which beams the first sixteenth note to the second dotted-eighth note rather than the first. The ensemble was asked to play with lightness and lift rather than with a heavy legato, and to put the emphasis on the sixteenth notes rather than on the dotted-eighth notes.

In addition, the ensemble was instructed not to let the pulsating eighth notes become too heavy. Instead, the ensemble placed the emphasis on the first beat. Each successive beat was played more lightly. It was also important to give each eighth rest full value so that the tempo did not rush, which would have undermined the stability and stateliness of the movement.

The ensemble marked all hemiolas in their score during rehearsal. Bach used a hemiola to strengthen cadences in eight of the nine sub-sections of the aria. Execution of these three main stylistic areas, the dotted-eighth – sixteenth note motive of the main theme, the pulsating eighth note chords of the

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<sup>10</sup> Johann Sebastian Bach, *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke: BWV 84*, ed. Reinhold Kubik, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Echterdingen, Germany: Carus-Verlag, Stuttgart, 1985/1992).

<sup>11</sup> Dreyfus, *Bach's Continuo Group*, 106.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

accompaniment, and the pervasive use of hemiola, came together to form a full, rich, stately movement with which to open the cantata.

The second aria (movement three), *Ich esse mit Freuden*, is the lightest of the five movements. It is the only movement in a major key and is written in a sprightly 3/8 meter. The instrumentation is thinner: soprano soloist, oboe, and violin solo accompanied by the continuo group. Stylistically, the perpetual motion in the second aria contrasts the stateliness of the opening aria. The oboe and the violin trade running sixteenth notes over the continuo group's perpetual arpeggiated eighth notes. The continuo group was reminded to lightly articulate the bass line so the aria maintained a dance-like affect. The aria's feeling of perpetual motion lent itself to rushing, especially in the continuo group. The ensemble was reminded not to increase the tempo, and to remain mindful of the demanding sixteenth note runs in the oboe part. Balancing the melodic material between three soloists was difficult, yet the performers were aware of this issue when presenting the melodic material. This aided the balance for the listener.

The fourth movement, an *accompagnato* recitative, employs the full string complement and uses full, sustained chords to contrast with both the previous recitative and aria. The soloist's declamation of the text should be the driving stylistic element. In this performance, however, the relative inexperience of the ensemble combined with limited rehearsal time necessitated curbing the soloist's rhythmic freedom in the fourth measure. Ideally, this would have been fixed before the performance through repetition, and by providing the strings a better rhythmic understanding of the vocal line.

The fifth and final movement, *Ich leb indes in dir vergnüget*, is a chorale, and was intended for congregational singing. Stylistically, it was important to note that the fermatas indicate the end of a phrase rather than a lengthening of the note values. For this performance, since it was a concert as opposed to a church service, the choir sang, doubled by the instruments.

Giovanna Battista Pergolesi (1710 – 1736) was a composer who bridged the Baroque and Classical periods. Pergolesi left a lasting impact on Western Classical music, despite dying at the age of twenty-six. His posthumous fame was extraordinary, especially at a time when the vast majority of works performed were written by living composers. His *opera buffa*, *La serva padrona* influenced generations of subsequent composers and served, in Paris, as the focus for *Querelle des Bouffons*, the war of words

between the proponents of traditional French opera and the progressives who advocated for elements of Italian *opera buffa*.<sup>13</sup> Pergolesi's final work, *Stabat mater*, enjoyed equal popularity and became the most frequently published single work of the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

For this recital performance, the first, eighth, and twelfth movements of the *Stabat mater* were performed. The *Stabat mater* was originally written for soprano (castrato) and alto (male alto) soloists, but there is a long tradition of choral performance.<sup>15</sup> The ensemble included two first violins, two second violins, two violas, one cello, and a harpsichord. During performance, the singers used the G. Schirmer<sup>16</sup> edition and the instrumentalists played from the Bärenreiter<sup>17</sup> edition. The G. Schirmer edition was used because it was owned by the university, however multiple discrepancies caused unnecessary problems and wasted valuable rehearsal time. In retrospect, it would have been more efficient to use an edition in the public domain and to make the necessary markings before distributing the music to the singers. In general terms, the G. Schirmer edition simplified aspects of the Bärenreiter edition, edited by Malcolm Bruno and Caroline Ritchie. Specifically, in the first movement, the G. Schirmer edition did not include trill markings in the following measures: 17, 23, 38, and 40. Also, the rhythm was simplified in measures 19 and 21. In both instances, the singers followed the G. Schirmer edition. The eighth movement was the most complicated. In the G. Schirmer edition, the meter employed two beats to the measure. The Bärenreiter used four. In the introduction to the Bärenreiter edition Bruno and Ritchie explained that two editions were used as original sources. The first source is an autograph manuscript in the composer's hand. The second source is a manuscript score copied from a set of performing parts.<sup>18</sup> In the first source the eighth movement is barred at the *breve*, but the second source is barred at the *semibreve*.<sup>19</sup> Bruno and Ritchie chose to follow the first source for the Bärenreiter edition. G. Schirmer chose the second. The performance

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<sup>13</sup> Helmut Hucke and Dale E. Monson, "Pergolesi, Giovanni Battista." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21325> (accessed February 26, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, *Stabat mater*, ed. Malcolm Bruno and Caroline Ritchie. (Bärenreiter Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter-Verlag Karl Vötterle GmbH & Co., 2012), VII.

<sup>16</sup> Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, *Stabat mater*. (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc). Editor not available.

<sup>17</sup> Pergolesi, *Stabat mater*, ed. Malcolm Bruno and Caroline Ritchie.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.

was conducted in two due to the relative musical experience of the two ensembles. The two editions had one other major musical difference; the G. Schirmer edition left out two-measures worth of material that should exist between measures 24 and 25. Again, because of the relative musical adaptability of the two ensembles, the performance followed the G. Schirmer edition. The remaining differences in the eighth movement are relatively minor. Text underlay differed a few places; here, the singers followed the Bärenreiter text. Again, trills were left out, and measures 56 – 57 in the G. Schirmer (measures 29 – 30 in the Bärenreiter) were rhythmically altered. The G. Schirmer was followed in order to facilitate choral uniformity.

The final two movements, *Quando corpus morietur* and *Amen*, are designated two distinct movements in the G. Schirmer edition. In this recital performance, the movements were performed *attacca*, as indicated in the Bärenreiter. *Quando corpus morietur* was the only movement performed in which the strings did not play *colla parte* with the voices. This made the singers uncomfortable, so one of the first violins doubled the sopranos, and one of the second violins doubled the altos. This was possible because the first and second violins are in unison the entire movement. In the *Amen*, the only alteration was to drop the trills from the Bärenreiter to promote choral unity. In retrospect, trying to meld two editions was incredibly difficult and inefficient, and would not be attempted in the future.

Pergolesi was a composer who bridged the stylistic differences between the older Baroque contrapuntal style and the newer galant style.<sup>20</sup> The first movement, *Stabat mater dolorosa*, was written in the Baroque style, as can be seen in the walking bass line and use of imitation. Analysis revealed three main compositional motives; a “suspension” theme characterized by a pervasive use of 4-3 and 2-1 suspension, a “C-pedal” theme, and a “deceptive cadence” theme. The structure of the movement is a basic AB form, but the three themes give the movement continuity and interest. The singers and instrumentalists were instructed to bring each theme out of the texture. In the first theme, the singers were encouraged to crescendo into the dissonance created by the suspensions. The long lines were balanced by the separation in the walking bass. In the second theme, the differences in the violin articulation – slurred versus staccato –

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<sup>20</sup> Hucce and Monson, “Pergolesi, Giovanni Battista.” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.*

were emphasized. In the third theme, the dynamic differences and the off-beat accents in the violins were brought out.

The eighth movement, *Fac ut ardeat cor meum*, also in the Baroque style, is a three-voice fugue presented in five subject entry-episode statements. During the subject entries, the ensemble was instructed to recognize and bring out the main subject. This became increasingly difficult as the subject is presented in *stretto* at increasingly shorter intervals. The third entry group is more difficult because the subject entries are uneven. In the fifth entry group, which functions as a coda, only one voice has the subject, which helps untangle the increasingly dense movement. Pergolesi used three motives during the episodes that follow each entry group, creating continuity amidst chaos. In the first episode, the three motives are presented in sequence. In the subsequent episodes, the motives are used in different combinations and iterations. The final episode, which is part of the coda, includes only the third motive, again helping to bring the movement to a close.

The twelfth movement, *Quando corpus morietur*, is in the *galant* style. The melody is in the voices and the instrumentalists have a purely accompanimental role. The salient features of the melody are the long lines, the imitation between the soprano and alto voice, and the dissonances resulting from the use of suspensions. To bring out these stylistic details in performance, the singers were instructed to crescendo into the dissonances, and to keep the long lines full of energy. Dynamic markings, often informed by formal analysis, text placement, and harmonic motion, were added to help keep the energy level high. For example, a long crescendo was added in measures 14 – 16. This corresponded with the end of the A section, the text “paradisi gloria,” the use of a 4-3 suspension, and the brief tonicization of Bb Major. The long lines and dissonances in *Quando corpus morietur* contrast with the *Amen*.

*Amen* is in the Baroque style. The form is AB Coda. The A section is an extremely fast-paced *fugato* with a subject and two counter subjects. One of the counter subjects, the “instrumental countersubject,” is only found in the instrumental accompaniment. The second counter subject, the “vocal countersubject,” is found in the vocal parts (doubled *colla parte* in the instruments). With three important subjects in such a brief span of time, it was imperative that each voice and each instrument know its function. Both the subject and the vocal countersubject are scalar-based melodies. When working together,

they create a series of suspensions. The instrumental countersubject is more disjunct, and helps to aurally balance the long, scalar lines. The B section takes yet another scalar theme and develops it through a rhythmically extended circle of fifths. Stylistically, the ensemble was reminded to keep the held pedal point from becoming heavy or static. The B section ends with a reiteration of the subject and both countersubjects. The Coda develops material that was briefly introduced in measures 49-50.

Hans Leo Hassler (1564 – 1612) was a significant German composer of the late Renaissance.<sup>21</sup> He studied with Andrea Gabrieli in Venice and consequently was important in spreading the Italian musical style throughout Germany.<sup>22</sup> His ability to compose fluid melodic lines within a balanced formal structure is often compared to that of Palestrina.<sup>23</sup> The motet, *Dixit Maria ad angelum*, was originally written in the key of C Major for SATB choir. The performing edition used was edited by Dr. John Len Wiles. Stylistically, the AB motet is a combination of polyphonic imitative and homophonic sections. Each voice part is rhythmically and melodically independent at times. It is essential for a clear performance that the singers understand their function at each point of the phrase. During the A section, each voice part presents the theme in turn, which is relatively simple to understand and bring out appropriately. The shape of the line is determined by a combination of word stress and relative pitch. In general, as the pitch rises and falls, so does the shape of the line. However, after the initial presentation, the layering becomes more complex. The ensemble was asked to highlight the main theme in each part to aid in clarity and audience comprehension. Of secondary, but almost equal importance, are the moments of interest and movement in the accompanying voices. For example, the second basses have the melody in measure nine, but the second tenors have a beautiful repeated eighth note – sixteenth note countermelody that should be brought out of the texture as well. To round out the stylistic interpretation, the ensemble worked for balanced, unified vowels and a tempo that did not allow the piece to drag.

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<sup>21</sup> Dennis Schrock, *Choral Repertoire*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 124.

<sup>22</sup> Walter Blankenburg and Vincent J. Panetta, "Hassler." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12525pg2> (accessed June 9, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Schrock, *Choral Repertoire*. 124.

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a prolific American composer. While her compositional output is diverse, she has a special love of choral music. During an interview with Gene Brooks she said that, “I decided at that time if I could only write one kind of music, it would be choral, because people have always sung and always will sing. . . When you write for the human voice, you are writing for something that is universal and everlasting.”<sup>24</sup> Appropriately, UNI’s Varsity Men’s Glee Club performed her arrangement of *How Can I Keep from Singing?* The composition was originally for SA(T)B, but the composer also made an arrangement for TTBB and SSAA. The hymn is an old Quaker song, and dates back to the early 1800s.<sup>25</sup> Stylistically, the vocal parts are homophonic and relatively straightforward. The vocal texture, however, changes frequently. A new texture is introduced approximately every four bars. The textures include unison, two-part, four-part, homophonic, and imitative. The piano accompaniment is more complicated, and adds to the stylistic colors through a series of four accompanimental themes. Memorization was difficult for the performers, but was aided through in-class analysis of the form, which is an unconventional verse-refrain structure. There are three verses. The second and third verses are followed by a driving, celebratory “la-la” theme. At the end of the piece, part of the second verse is repeated, but in a different arrangement than the first iteration. It is followed by the “la-la” theme again, which this time functions as a coda. By fully exploring the different stylistic textures of the vocal parts and the piano parts, the ensemble was able to impart the “celebratory and life-affirming aspects of the song,” that Ms. Walker envisioned.<sup>26</sup>

Alice Parker (b. 1925) and Robert Shaw (1916 – 1999) collaboratively arranged over 200 choral works.<sup>27</sup> Throughout their long partnership, their salient stylistic features remained remarkably stable. In his article “The Choral Arrangements of Alice Parker and Robert Shaw,” Jim Taylor lays out the common stylistic traits of these arrangements. *Seeing Nellie Home* is consistent with many of those features, and is especially defined by four specific traits. First is the “multiplicity of voicings within an arrangement.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gene Brooks, “Gwyneth Walker: An Interview with Gwyneth Walker,” <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinf5.html> (accessed June 9, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Jim Taylor, “The Choral Arrangements of Alice Parker and Robert Shaw,” *Choral Journal* 52 (June 2012): 33.

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, *The Choral Arrangements of Alice Parker and Robert Shaw*, 36.

*Seeing Nellie Home* is in verse-refrain form, and there are a variety of voicings within each verse. For example, the second verse alone has five different vocal textures in sixteen measures. The second defining stylistic trait is “a wide variety of dynamics and articulation within a piece, often with sudden contrasts.”<sup>29</sup> This can be seen in the third verse, which starts out *pianissimo*, *hushed*, and utilizes rests, spoken accents, crescendos, decrescendos, legato, *sforzando*, accents, and staccatos. It ends in *pianissimo*, *whispered*. The third defining stylistic trait is “harmonies are not complex.”<sup>30</sup> *Seeing Nellie Home* is in C Major. It utilizes a basic I – ii – IV – V – I harmonic pattern throughout. The most daring harmonic moment is the deceptive cadence in measure 32. The final defining trait is “great rhythmic drive/interest in rhythmically-based pieces.”<sup>31</sup> This trait can be seen throughout the arrangement in the pulsing eighth-note accompanimental motive, the use of rests to add surprise or break up the texture, and the imitative writing prominent in the third verse. The variety of textures, dynamics, and articulations, combined with rhythmic drive and intensity results in an arrangement that is exciting and vibrant, despite a conservative harmonic structure.

Gerald Finzi (1901 – 1956) composed *My Spirit Sang All Day* as the third part-song in the choral song cycle *The Seven Part-songs of Robert Bridges* from 1934 – 1937. Composed shortly after marrying his wife, Joyce Black, in 1933, the cycle frequently references to “joy,” as does *My Spirit Sang All Day*. Stylistically, the uneven meters, designed to emphasize the natural cadence and word-stress of the text, characterize the piece. The changing meter and *vivace* tempo require careful attention during rehearsal. These two features also presented conducting difficulties. As the tempo increased, the tactus changed from a single quarter note to alternating between two or three quarter notes. Another salient feature is the unusual harmonic progression. The piece is *a cappella*, and the harmonies, which are based on chromatic mediant, can be difficult for young singers. Formally, the piece is through-composed, and can be separated into six sections by the text “O my joy!” and its various iterations. These moments serve as both punctuation and emphasis, and should be brought out of the texture. When these features are mastered, the resulting performance is vibrant, rich, and almost breathlessly anticipatory.

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<sup>29</sup> Taylor, *The Choral Arrangements of Alice Parker and Robert Shaw*, 36.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

Thomas Tallis (1505 – 1585) was an English composer who lived during the tumultuous transition from Catholicism to the newly-created Anglican Church. Indeed, his compositions became the stylistic and formal blueprint for subsequent Anglican Church music.<sup>32</sup> *If ye love me* is an early Renaissance motet, and reflects the structural and harmonic practices of the day. The ensemble was instructed to strive for fluid lines where the emphasis is placed on word stress more than on metric stress. Texturally, the piece is a combination of homophonic, polyphonic, and imitative sections. However, the texts, “If ye love me, keep my commandments,” and “he may bide with your for ever” are set homophonically, to ensure the clarity of the text and the message. In performance, the ensemble was encouraged to move toward these moments of emphasis with ever increasing energy. The texts “and I will pray the Father,” and “ev’n the spirit of truth” are set polyphonically, which can be seen as word painting of the numerous voices raised in prayer, or the ever-present nature of the spirit. During the polyphonic and imitative sections, the performers were instructed to bring out the important head motives and moving lines.

Much of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s (1756 – 1791) professional career was spent in Salzburg at the court of Archbishop Colloredo. The sacred music Mozart composed for Archbishop Colloredo was constrained by Colloredo’s insistence on short church services. This led to compositions with little or no orchestral introductions or interludes, the use of polytextuality, little fugal writing, and primarily declamatory vocal writing.<sup>33</sup> *Dixit Dominus* is the opening movement from Mozart’s *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, and stylistically it is representative of the music Mozart wrote while in the employ of Archbishop Colloredo. *Vesperae solennes de confessore* has six movements, and was written for orchestra, SATB Chorus, and SATB soloists. For this performance, the Alice Parker/ Robert Shaw edition was used.

*Dixit Dominus* exhibits many of the traits of Mozart’s compositions for Archbishop Colloredo. While *Dixit Dominus* does not employ polytextuality, the vocal parts are declamatory in nature. The majority of the piece is homophonic, with brief periods of polyphony or imitation. Textual clarity is extremely important stylistically, so word stress, vowel purity, and consonant articulation were significant

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<sup>32</sup> Paul Doe and David Allinson, "Tallis, Thomas." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27423> (accessed February 21, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Robert J. Summer, *Choral Masterworks from Bach to Britten: Reflections of a Conductor* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007) 29.

points of emphasis during rehearsal. Much of the drama of the piece comes in the orchestral parts, which support the meaning of the text. Psalm 109/110<sup>34</sup> is rather dramatic, and occasionally violent. It is easy to sing everything *forte*. However doing so creates a wall of sound that is difficult for audience members to process. It is essential to add dynamics and articulations to increase textual clarity reflect the meaning of the text, and to prevent vocal fatigue.

This recital program exposed the conductor and the performing ensembles to stylistic and performance differences in choral music from the Renaissance period to the present day. To create sensitive and accurate performances, stylistic differences and salient features of each individual song and time period were thoroughly explored. Recordings of all performances accompany this paper, which is composed in partial fulfillment of the Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting.

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<sup>34</sup> In Catholic Bibles, which would have been used at the court of Archbishop Colloredo, this Psalm is number 109. In Protestant Bibles, the Psalms are numbered differently, and this Psalm is number 110.

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

*PRESENTS*

A Graduate Recital in Choral Conducting  
Fall 2013

**Alice Reid Pruisner, conductor**  
**Cantorei**  
**Women's Chorus**  
**UNI Varsity Men's Glee Club**  
**UNI Singers**  
**and Members of the Northern Iowa University Orchestra**

*Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke*

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685 – 1750)

1. Aria - *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke*
2. Recitative - *Gott ist mir ja nichts schuldig*  
Michelle Monroe, soprano
3. Aria - *Ich esse mit Freuden*
4. Recitative – *Im Schweiß meines Angesichts*  
Lara Wasserman, soprano
5. Choral – *Ich leb indes in dir vergnüget*

**Cantorei**

**Members of the Northern Iowa University Orchestra**  
Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center  
September 20, 2013  
12:15pm

*Stabat mater*

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi  
(1710 – 1736)

1. *Stabat mater dolorosa*
8. *Fac, ut ardeat cor meum*
12. *Quando corpus morietur, Amen*

**Women's Chorus**

**Benjamin Owen, pianist**  
**Members of the Northern Iowa University Orchestra**  
Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center  
October 24, 2013  
7:30pm

*Dixit Maria ad angelum*

Hans Leo Hassler  
(1564 – 1612)

*How Can I Keep from Singing?*

Gwyneth Walker  
(b. 1947)

*Seeing Nellie Home*

arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw  
(b. 1925) and (1916 – 1999)

**UNI Varsity Men's Glee Club**

**Jessica Schick, pianist**

Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center

October 24, 2013

7:30pm

*My Spirit Sang All Day*

Gerald Finzi  
(1901 – 1956)

*If ye love me*

Thomas Tallis  
(1505 – 1585)

*Dixit Dominus from Vesperae solennes de confessore*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756 – 1791)

Hope Metts, soprano; McKayla McDonald, alto

Alex Wilkening, tenor; Josh Ostermann, bass

**UNI Singers**

**Michael Gookin, pianist**

Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center

November 5, 2013

7:30pm

*This recital performance is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music in Choral Conducting degree at the University of Northern Iowa School of Music. Alice Pruisner is a student of Dr. John Wiles.*