

A Tenor's Texture

Outcome Report

REPORT

Thanks to the generous funding of Miller Arts Scholars, I was able to conduct half-hour voice lessons with Professor William Ferguson this fall. We have met five times, each time getting to know each other more and to explore my voice further. Our time together has certainly been different from my past vocal encounters. I've found the work we are doing magnitudes more challenging than anything I've done before vocally, but I'm also finding it rewarding. In addition, with some prior vocal coaches, I have expressed any number of concerns, but many of my teachers were not able to dedicate adequate time to hear what I was saying. So far, with Professor Ferguson, I feel as though we are both putting in appropriate effort: he listens to my discomforts and knows exactly how to respond, even if it takes me a while to process his advice.

We began with an in-depth dive into some basics of techniques, showing me parts of my voice I haven't accessed before. We sang through Vaccai vocal exercises, presenting me with simple Italian and an introduction into what this style of singing demands, especially in manifesting itself in musical concepts with which I am already familiar (rudimentary intervals, melodic jumps, etc.). Because I enrolled a few weeks into the semester, I made a late decision to participate in juries to audition for 3000-level courses and scholarships. It is expected for participants to prepare two contrasting songs, so Professor Ferguson chose "Caro Mio Ben" by Giuseppe Giordani as a slow, tender ballad to contrast with "I'll Sail Upon the Dog-Star" by Henry Purcell, a rambunctious, ambitious, high-energy piece.

Preparing each piece paired well with the other. For "Caro Mio Ben," I learned more Italian diction, a facet with which we spent much time (even up until the morning of my jury). I am excited to attempt Italian and other languages with more guidance. I also faced challenges sustaining longer phrases which required intentional breath preparation, especially when I was singing the piece in a higher key. After a few weeks, we moved both songs down several keys in order to free up more energy for these former aspects, requiring less focus on note difficulty and range extension. Moving "Caro Mio Ben" down especially helped me become more gradually acquainted with different breathing techniques and diction. For "Dog-Star," I also used much of our time to focus on breath, but in a different way: the piece is *vivace*, meaning "lively," one of the fastest tempi. Quick melismatic notes posed more areas for careful consideration; I came to enjoy these passages after solo metronome work. I also embraced the challenge of singing in a new English style. The vowels and overall diction for Purcell diverge from my conversational English, and I learned that finding those differences quickly was essential. Overall, we began the process of cementing healthy habits with my new voice, and I can already tell how impactful and essential our time together has been.

As of writing this report, I sang in front of my first jury panel yesterday, and I expect to hear back from them in the next few weeks. If I score well enough to enroll in a 3000-level course and/or qualify for a scholarship, I look forward to speeding up my studies. If they decide that I need more time before engaging in higher-level classes, I am grateful for my introduction to juries, and I will

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work even harder to grow next semester and to continue to aim for these goals. Either way, this semester of voice lessons has been incredibly beneficial, and I look forward to continuing this journey over the next year and a half!

MEDIA

Below is the last page of “Dog-Star.” You can see just how exciting this piece is!



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Caro mio ben
 Thou, all my bliss
 Arietta

Giuseppe Giordani (Giordanello)
 (1744 - 1798)

English version by
 Dr. Theodore Baker

Larghetto ♩ = 60

Voice

Piano

dolce *largamente*

Ca - ro mio ben, ere - di - mi - si - men, sen - za di te lan - gui - see il
 Thou, all my bliss, Be - lieve but this: When thou art far My heart is

con - ca - ro mio ben, sen - za di te lan - gui - see il
 lorn... Thou, all my bliss, When thou art far My heart is

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Above is the first page of “Caro Mio Ben” by Giordani. It is very sweet, slow, genuine, and honest.

Finally, linked here is an [audio clip](#) of a lesson in which I was singing “Dog-Star.” This is not the finished product, but is certainly a real part of the process!

BUDGET

<i>Cost</i>	<i>Item</i>
\$425	½ credit (2000 level) private voice lessons.