

A STYLE GUIDE FOR SELECTED SONGS OF CHARLES IVES

BY

A. JACOB SENTGEORGE

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Prof. J. Peter Burkholder, Research Director

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Prof. Mary Ann Hart, Chairperson

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Prof. Robert Harrison

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Prof. Andreas Poulimenos

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## INTRODUCTION

The selected songs of Charles Ives highlighted in this style guide are appropriate expressive assignments for beginning singers that allow greater access to the development of the tools of emotional articulation in singing. These profoundly important tools then form a passage to understanding and performing the rest of the art song genre. A significant problem faced by the teacher of beginning singers is how to develop more technical skill in lessons but still encourage more expressive singing in performances. These two forces may conflict with each other for even the most advanced student. The challenge involves the self-awareness of the student (How do I sound now? Who dislikes my sound? Do I like it?) and the student's awareness of the expressive possibilities in an art song performance. As the latter is unfamiliar to most beginners, this guide demonstrates how selected songs of Charles Ives can help a teacher of beginning singers develop the tools of expressive singing earlier in the student's training timeline, and in a more concentrated way than the majority of anthologized art songs available.

This guide will begin with an explanation of why these selected songs of Charles Ives can help the beginning voice student achieve more expressive singing goals earlier in their training than if they studied the art songs that are widely published. Next, the guide offers aesthetic considerations and context for the teacher regarding Ives's contemporaries and what he thought song could achieve, followed by a discussion of the performance requirements that Ives sought, and how the beginner may find more technical skill by seeking more expressive skill.

Following this is a comparison of the various types of song that the beginner likely has encountered and how this informs their vocal model, and then there is an essay describing the sentimentality and irony in these selected songs. After that is the large section of Style Sheets which describe the particular expressive goals of each song, and the guide ends with technical exercises that include specific explanations of score study, text study, diction, recitation, extensive breathing, and mirror rehearsal.

A crucial aspect of addressing the problems of technical development and of expressive performing is song selection. By demonstrating that these nineteen selections from Ives's song output can address the complex problems of both technique and expressivity, this guide intends to promote more expressive singing at an earlier stage of a singer's training. Though there are many options for art song selection available to a teacher, these selected songs are put forward as alternatives to the widely distributed art song anthologies. The selected songs are accessible to beginning singers, but are briefer, more concentrated, and more expressive than the art songs most familiar to teachers in North America. The songs involve crucial technical tests for the beginner, such as legato singing, clear diction, large interval singing, chromatic passages, rhythmic and melodic challenges, quick renewal of breath between phrases, dynamic contrasts, clear gestural and facial choices, sustained quiet singing, relationship of breathing to expression, and study of both score and text in tandem.



## CHAPTER 1

### Why the songs of Charles Ives can help the beginning voice student

Introducing art song to a new generation of singers presents significant dilemmas. Teachers introduce this art form to beginning voice students in high school, for local and state competitions, and the current system of American university education requires art song study as part of the applied lesson. Since classical vocalism requires techniques and timbres that are unfamiliar to many beginning singers, the challenges for a teacher involve how the student perceives music and singing. It is important to note that the students have all heard several thousand songs in many different varieties before they enter a voice lesson, so that the vocal models with which they are most familiar and have the greatest identification are almost certainly not classical. Because of this, the young singer may often hear the teacher's singing voice, with classically-trained timbre, as fake, pompous, and far too loud. For the singing teacher, the successful introduction of art song hinges on this problem of perception.

Beyond the timbral question lie the unknown contents of the art song itself. The beginning singer begins to encounter strange (or even banal) poetry set to elongated, stylized musical phrases, or, and this is perhaps most tedious for them, the singer encounters the impenetrability of a foreign language. The teacher can best introduce art song to this learner by selecting an appealing song, by providing a translation, and by listening intently along with them. With a repeat hearing of the recording, and a discussion of the student's perception, the teacher further eases the

student into the idiom. Hearing excellent recordings and observing closely the performances of more advanced students within the studio or department allows the eager beginner to comprehend the art form. In this crucial way, the teacher of a beginning singer is a teacher of listening.

This study intends to support the teacher's efforts in attracting the mind of the beginning classical singer and to cultivate the singer's expressive performing skills. As will be shown, Ives's ideas in these songs are not so abstracted or inaccessible as his reputation may warrant, but they are often complex. The teacher will be given a sort of map (a style sheet) for each song to assist a student to begin to understand the immense possibilities in performing art song. In her well-known art song style guide, Carol Kimball describes how the attentive listener responds to hearing an art song and how the singer can better deliver it: "The listener responds to the images made from the words, melodies, rhythms and harmonies created by the composer. . . . The singer will best present the imagery by looking at the song's style. As singers, we want to understand these images at a deeper level, to probe into the parts of the song that create them."<sup>1</sup>

The appeal of these songs is straightforward: they are brief (excepting one 3 minute song, they are between 1 and 2.5 minutes), in English (excepting two German songs), and in a medium range and tessitura. With a shorter song and smaller range the teacher can challenge the singer with expressive goals rather than with memorization, or fretting over the high note at the end. The goal of more expressive singing is almost wholly dependent on the singer becoming engaged in

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Style and Literature* (Redmond, WA: Pst, 1996), 1.

the moment-by-moment work of performing. If the beginning singer cares more about the end-product, if they take more ownership, they will progress very quickly.

Beginning singers are often advised by their teachers to purchase art song anthologies. The publishers of the anthologies seek the best market for their product, and so they sensibly publish “appealing” songs, with little risk of poetic “weirdness” in them. These songs are often gently melodramatic or melancholic (e.g. “A Perfect Day” (1910) by Carrie Jacobs-Bond), but always very tuneful. From a publisher’s perspective, the attractive melodies far outweigh the expressive concerns, and this sensible status quo has remained in classical vocal anthologies since Ives’s time.<sup>2</sup> The concern of this study is that these types of songs do little to challenge the expressive capabilities of beginners—they must simply sing the pretty tune in a pretty manner, which is a certain small achievement. Nor do these types of songs hint at the powerful possibilities of more vivid art song. The teacher needs better beginner’s songs, and this guide offers support.

Ives’s philosophy of music, to be discussed later, undermines the status quo of published “acceptable” music. Although he enlarged the scope and purpose of art song beyond the aims of the canon of European songs—from such composers as Schubert, Wolf, Brahms, Mussorgsky, Fauré, and Debussy—Ives’s easier songs, I argue, can form a bridge to the canon. For if the only songs that are sung in the first two years of training are primarily tuneful rather than expressive or meaningful,

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<sup>2</sup> Several songs from different popular anthologies fit this “appealing” type: Oley Speaks’s “Morning,” John Alden Carpenter’s “The sleep that flits on baby’s eyes,” Rudolph Ganz’s “A Memory,” Bryceson Treharne’s “Corals,” and Carl Engel’s “Sea-Shell.” Though these songs contain an archaic type of poetry similar to some of the poems that Ives set, they typify the perfumed imagery of the early twentieth-century genteel song that Ives rejected.

when will the young artist develop their expressive skills? This crucial element of performing art song is often delayed until the intermediate and advanced stages of training as the students begin to study the canon.

A discernible technical progression in classical vocalism requires that the heart and mind of the young artist be engaged, and these selected songs contain within them a genuine expression that can appeal to the young artist at the earliest stage of their training. I believe that students and teachers will sense Ives's search for authenticity in singing above mere beauty, and will become invigorated by it. At precisely those moments, when the student is charged with the power of art song, the student will begin to breathe with clearer intentions for each phrase, and the mediocre sounds will begin to be separated from the energized and expressive ones.

Because beginning students rarely find more than superficial appeal in the genteel melodies, their minds and hearts are not engaged in their singing. The well-known vocal pedagogue and editor Joan Boytim finds, in her experience, that teenagers prefer melodious songs.<sup>3</sup> But if a student sings a pretty melody, with an appealing sound, the praise they receive dissolves quickly and little substantive progress toward more expressive singing is achieved. This is not because singers are inherently more superficial, or egotistical; it has more to do with the nature of

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<sup>3</sup> Joan Frey Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook: A Practical Guide to all Aspects of Teaching* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2003), 39. Boytim offers the well-founded opinion: "We should not project a highly experienced adult's tastes onto young students not ready to communicate subtle and sophisticated emotions. . . . Through my extensive work with teenagers, I find that my students prefer very melodious songs, of which many seem to stir their inner emotions. It seems as if, in the case of shy students, the things they are feeling can only be expressed through the medium of song."

the instrument being inside the individual, and the feedback system consisting of bone conduction and the acoustical properties of the room in which they sing.

The great expressive value in the melodies Ives created lies in their simplicity, and in the poignant text-based details that animate this simplicity. For example, in the song “Spring Song” Ives repeats two parts of the text, and with those repetitions he intensifies the entire song.

Example 1 -



“Spring Song” by Charles Ives Used by Permission of Peer International Corporation.

By repeating the first phrase “and called,” (Example 1) he sets up the second, more dramatic, repetition of “and wait” (Example 2) This textual repetition is augmented by a fermata on the note prior to “and wait,” as well as by a tempo change to the slower *lento* which brings the song to a close. This simple idea rouses a simple poem to become a more vivid piece.

Example 2

*rit.*  
 I on - ly heard her not, and wait and wait.  
*p* *lento*  
*poco rit.* *pp* *ppp*

How does the teacher connect to the student's artistic sense at such an early stage?

This style guide will point the teacher to several of Ives's songs that are most useful for making such connections and will explain the expressive benefits of them for the beginner. Two examples illustrate the expressive traits of Ives's craft well:

- (1) In the brief song "There Is a Lane," there is a subtle alteration of the rising melodic line in two phrases. Compare the phrase at the words "Passing a wood where" (Example 3: mm. 7-8) with "Learned I a love song" (Example 4, mm. 15-16).

#### Example 3

winds towards the bay, Pass- ing a wood where the  
*cresc.*  
*cresc.* (b)

#### Example 4



When repeated in the latter phrase, the delicate melodic lift on a higher arc toward the word “song” evokes the sense that the speaker is slightly more nostalgic and tender toward the “song” than the cherished “wood” mentioned earlier. This evocative moment, in a brief song, illustrates how expressive even these selected songs for beginners can be.

(2) In the song “Memories,” there is an even subtler expressive gesture.

Compare the phrases at mm. 58-61 and mm. 66-70. Ives emphasizes the throwaway nature of the tune already described in the song with the rhythmic change of the words “common little” (m. 67) as follows: the word little is not equal eight notes, but instead is given a shortened sixteenth note for the first syllable “li-” which makes the word somehow “littler” to the ear. Then at the words “slow up both” (m. 69), he does not mark it, but the doubled plosive of “p” and “b” evokes the feeling that the text actually describes—that the tune slows up the feet of the beloved uncle. The singer takes slightly longer to pronounce those two consonants together, so they are slowed up

just like the uncle's feet. That a melody and poem can achieve this unity is a very powerful lesson for the new singer, since these details are hidden in plain view.

The selected songs in this guide overcome several of the initial difficulties described above. Serving as a kind of aural bridge from the popular style of singing to the classical are "The Greatest Man," "A Song—For Anything," and "Romanzo di Central Park." Several songs are more firmly in a classical style with more lyricism and pathos, such as "Spring Song," "Autumn," and "Songs My Mother Taught Me." Most of the songs are in English, along with two in German that are included here for their expressive challenges: "Feldeinsamkeit" and "Du alte Mutter." All of the selected songs are gently poetic, or clearly humorous, or intensely expressive, and thus are likely to appeal to the young singer.

This guide points to songs that offer a higher demand of expressivity from the singer than the average anthologized song. By joining their searching energies to these songs, and by insisting that they seek more than merely beautiful sounds, we can encourage more expressively beautiful singing at an earlier stage of training. Though technical progress is crucial, sensitive apprentices should not wait until they are more advanced to begin their explorations in expressive singing. They should be challenged from the start of their training to be expressive singers rather than nice singers.

The appeal of Charles Ives to a younger mind may fall into two parts: his record, for he rejected the artificiality of what he perceived as the status quo of the art music world; and what Gayle Sherwood Magee in her biography calls his



physical connection to music, for his father George taught him that the best music has a physical appeal to it—and the best musicians truly feel the music.<sup>4</sup> In Charles Ives's opinion, there was far too much music that was consumed as mere entertainment. He felt that the most expressive music grabs the listener bodily, and does not merely please the ears. In this spirit, the teacher may fruitfully enter a discussion of what music the student has enjoyed most before seeking classical vocal training.

The new singer may be intrigued to know that Ives communicated an unusually seditious view of songs and singing in his *Postface to 114 Songs*. He thought a song “had a few rights” and asked, if it felt like “sitting on the curb, why not let it?”<sup>5</sup> This refers to a song that might have more character than beauty, and thus the singer or listener is asked why that song should be judged on merits it does not seek. In writing and composing Ives questioned the idea that a song, “always be a polite triad, a ‘breve gaudium’ a ribbon to match the voice.” He asked strange questions: “If a song wants to crawl, fly or climb will you stop it?”<sup>6</sup>

Ives sought to dissolve away the prettifying aspects of song and song recitalizing. He sought a more substantive and expressive type of song which draws

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<sup>4</sup> Gayle Sherwood Magee, *Charles Ives Reconsidered* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 28. “What Charles learned from George would eventually prove far more important than the nuts and bolts of standard harmony: the physical experience of music as more important than any written source.”

<sup>5</sup> Charles E. Ives, postface to *114 Songs* (Redding, Ct: By the Author, 1922; repr. New York: Associated Music Publishers, Peer International, and Theodore Presser, 1975), 262.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

nearer to a more robust spirituality in singing. Such performances would engage a listener—open new questions in their minds about memories, or seasons, for example—rather than simply let the songs wash over them. This fulcrum of active vs. passive listening is something each classical musician must confront in themselves as they progress.

We occasionally hear the “naturally gifted voice,” a voice so beautifully produced, with such clarity of tone, that we are tempted to lie back and, as is often the case when confronted with sheer beauty, not think at all. Ives recognized this indolent tendency, and hated it. So, in his songs, he insists that the performer convey the song with their full individuality *so that* the listener can do the same from their perspective. When this occurs, a more meaningful and marvelous thing has been created than just hearing nice sounds from a nice-looking young man or woman.

#### Aesthetic considerations and context

Ives speaks directly to this aesthetic consideration when he writes in the Postface to *114 Songs* that the “breve gaudium,” or brief pleasure, “with conventional harmony and easygoing melody” irritates with its docility.<sup>7</sup> Ives referred to this type of song, and its musical ethos, as the pillowed ear or allowing one’s ear to lie upon a couch, and, as such, it must be rejected as insubstantial.<sup>8</sup> For Ives, a substantial experience is active and includes a certain amount of risk and courage; if one lies on the couch, one is neither active nor courageous. The passive

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

listener, in Ives's aesthetic, waits for the music to reach them wherever they may be resting, but the active listener engages with the music and the composer. Indeed, Larry Starr says in his book on style in Ives's music that "the idea of journey, and of progression—physical, psychological and ultimately spiritual—is of supreme importance in the work of Ives."<sup>9</sup> This section will provide some context for these selected songs as well as Ives's general aesthetic philosophy.

Especially because his songs deal with domestic scenes, with spiritual alertness, and, more broadly, with the concerns of all human art, Ives writes that "we are dealing with subtle mysteries of motives, impulses, feelings, thoughts that shift, meet, combine and separate like clouds."<sup>10</sup> In this light we find that his songs, though often tuneful, avoid the pat or neatly sentimental gesture. The beginning singer may be attracted to these domestic songs, but their attention must be drawn to the profound values that Ives held. These can be summed up in the tension between "substance" and "manner," to be discussed later.

These songs are domestic-minded but not domesticated. For example, the song "Two Little Flowers" (Example 5) presents an unusual ostinato as a vibrant background to a scene of little girls being observed as they play in a backyard. The simple, sigh-like melody arcs over an open-sounding arpeggio (with a 9th at the top) for the first couplet, then at the beginning of the list of flowers it changes to a major 7th arpeggio, maintaining a pedal tone of the tonic D.

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<sup>9</sup> Larry Starr, *A Union of Diversities: Style in the Music of Charles Ives*. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 34.

<sup>10</sup> Ives, postface to *114 Songs*, 261. Quoting "Mr. Sedgwick . . . in his helpful and inspiring little book about Dante."

## Example 5

1 2 0 . TWO LITTLE FLOWERS  
(and dedicated to them)

[Harmony Twichell Ives (and Charles Ives?)]

**Allegretto**

*mp* On sun-ny days in

*p* *LH* *RH* *sempre*

*sempre* (the pedal following the piano's phrasing, not that of the voice)

our back-yard, two lit-tle flowers are seen, One dressed, at times, in

At the listing of flowers, the melody becomes quasi-monotone. At the word “violet” a 9th and a raised 5th and 6th introduced into the open arpeggios startles the serenity of the scene (Example 6). But harmony and melody return to tranquil and active simplicity initially heard by the return of the speaker’s gaze to the girls. The intense and fragile beauty of the two girls playing holds the speaker’s attention, and Ives supports the speaker’s emotional perspective with intense and vibrant musical gestures. Such an untame, yet domestic song, did not suit the tastes of the professional recitalists of the time.

## Example 6

12

ra-di-ant, the rose pass-ing fair; The

15

vi-o-let is ev-er dear, the or-chid ev-er

H. Wiley Hitchcock, in his critical edition of Ives's songs, describes the attitude of Ives toward the "ladybirds," as Ives pejoratively named them. These individuals controlled the organizations producing recitals in New York City and preferred the generically European-flavored music that most American classical composers of the time produced.<sup>11</sup> Ethelbert Nevin (1862–1901) and Oley Speaks (1874–1948), forgotten now but very popular then, were derided by Ives, as Peter Burkholder demonstrates in his book on Ives's uses of musical borrowing.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, ed., *Charles Ives: 129 Songs*, vol. 12 of *Music of the United States of America*, ed. Richard Crawford (Middletown, WI: A-R Editions, 2004), xxvii.

<sup>12</sup> J. Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 279, details the ways in

With the presentation by a willing recitalist, a composer presented their art songs, which shared the elevated attitude of the household song. The appetite for live performance of these songs grew from the widespread musical preference of an audience steeped in the household and “genteel” song tradition of the middle to late nineteenth century. The two factors contributing to this taste were the sharp increase in inexpensive piano production and the demand for sheet music that the entire family could enjoy, politely edifying all within earshot. The two most demanding audiences for sheet music were those of Tin Pan Alley and the household amateurs. Michael Turner describes the circumstances of the era in his book on parlour songs. With lofty titles such as “Gathered Pearls” and “Perfect Jewels” the collections of sheet music for the household amateurs proved incredibly lucrative for the competitive publishing houses.<sup>13</sup>

The sheet music industry had an audience who expected a certain tonality of both music and mood that was not quite classical. Regarding the consumption of genteel, classical, and music-hall songs, Stephen Banfield writes in his chapter of *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Music*:

Where the early twentieth century is concerned, then, the important historical distinction is perhaps not popular versus “classical” but proletarian versus genteel song—latter, wherever it lay on the spectrum of taste between homespun and elite, sporting social or aesthetic pretensions, the former, however well-crafted, needing none.

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which Ives satirized these two composers in his songs “On the Counter” and “The One Way.”

<sup>13</sup> Michael R. Turner, *The Parlour Song Book: A Casquet of Vocal Gems* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), 5-6.

This distinction helps make sense of the huge market for genteel songs and piano pieces. Only one small end of that market explored the Lied and *mélodie* traditions.<sup>14</sup>

In Hitchcock's words, these genteel songs tended toward a "self-conscious artificiality of text, far from the vernacular."<sup>15</sup> The artificial syntax and "high" poetry granted the songs more European sensibility to the American amateur's ear, and, thus, their popularity is easily measured in sales. Hitchcock gives an example from Chadwick's "Sweetheart, thy lips are touched with flame," from *Lyrics from "Told in the Gate"* (1897):<sup>16</sup>

Sweetheart, the blood leaps in thy cheek;  
Sweetheart, the very heart-throbs speak;  
Sweetheart, to chide I am too weak,  
    My heart so hotly beating  
    Is thy name repeating,  
Sweetheart, to still it seek.

These "loving" words seem dated to early twenty-first century readers, but early twentieth-century readers such as Ives found them archaic too. The repeated "sweetheart" becomes less convincing and more farcical with each repetition. The first line mentions blood and, soon after, the second and fourth lines describe the spastic, amorous heart which makes this stanza paradoxically grotesque as it seeks to be more poetic. Hitchcock continues discussing this Gilded-Age sense of the "artistic" which was expected to be "elevated and edifying, not self-expressive and

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Banfield, "Music, Text and Stage: The Tradition of Bourgeois Tonality to the Second World War," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004), 111.

<sup>15</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, xxix.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

certainly not everyday.”<sup>17</sup> The rhetorically overblown example above was likely not the common speech of the consumers of the song, and therefore was considered more elevated and appealing.

Contrast that example with Ives’s song “To Edith” (text by Harmony Twichell Ives):

So like a flower, thy little four-year face in its pure freshness,  
That to my bedside comes each morn in happy guise—  
    I must be smiling too.  
O little flower-like face, that comes to me each morn for kisses,  
Bend thou near me while I inhale its fragrance sweet—  
    And put a blessing there.

Here an everyday situation described in first person by a parent of a child elevates a small moment to poetic significance. Although the poetic images and syntax seem slightly old-fashioned, there is genuine emotion here, rather than overwrought sentiment. The power of this poem comes from the repetitive nature of domestic concerns, and the appreciation of beauty and poetry in them. Ives returns to texts that treasure the household sentiment in many other songs, including selections in this guide: “The Light That Is Felt,” “Du alte Mutter,” “There Is a Lane,” “Berceuse,” “Songs My Mother Taught Me,” and “Two Little Flowers.”

Ives rejected art that held itself apart from the common person. His musical philosophy is well-documented, and it suffices to say here that he is wary of the influences of very wealthy patrons and the opinions of paying customers.<sup>18</sup> The tendency to popularize art by clearing away the rough edges steers music away

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<sup>17</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, xxix.

<sup>18</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, xxix.



from developing spiritual sturdiness. More pithily, Ives says, "the more our composer accepts from his patrons . . . the less he will accept from himself."<sup>19</sup> So, we see the perspective of Charles Ives not as a composer who is being a loud rebel, but as a composer standing individually with other individuals and willing to passionately wrangle.

In his *Essays*, Ives praises the individual who, led by himself, rejects the primary leadership of anyone else. As a vigorous listener and reader, Ives's ideal individual will engage with the music being presented, not, as he writes in his *Essays*, passively "sniff its perfume or recline upon its couch."<sup>20</sup> This active engagement with art resonates with the audience's own store of memories and emotions. The singing actor creates this resonance using the essential notations the composer has written. In their book on acting style John Harrop and Sabin R. Epstein describe it well: "The actor must play what the playwright has given; he should not get caught up in self-examination and become so involved with his character that he develops detail not demanded by the action. There is no need for anything other than the essentials, highly focused and powerfully communicated."<sup>21</sup>

Clearly the more dissonant songs of his later career demand this reading, but even the simpler or more sentimental songs of Ives described in this guide require an alertness and attention by the performer and audience that repay both with its substantial art. Ives appeals to the individual's ability to tease out the meaning, to

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<sup>19</sup> Ives, *Essays*, 81.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>21</sup> John Harrop and Sabin R. Epstein, *Acting With Style* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), 32.

wrestle with the gestures, and to read the ironies and “sturdier spirituality” that he has sought to create.

### Ivesian distinctions and general technical observations

Several traits that distinguish Ives’s songs from other types of songs will be discussed in this section, as well as general technical observations. Pragmatically, the style sheets (below) for each song will provide a reference for new and advanced singers to select and program songs. By following the outlines of the songs’ textures, tempi, contrasts, crucial moments and vocal demands, the young singer, as well as the teacher of young singers, will have a clearer picture of what Ives songs are available to them.

In this guide we emphasize a small point for the novice: breathing the emotion of the phrase to follow. Often, it is the reversal of priorities of expression and technique that unlocks something in the beginner. By placing the emotional expression of the phrase ahead of the sung text, we find more substance in each phrase and come into line with Ives’s most important bit of musical philosophy. That the beginning singer may already have this artistic perception is one point of emphasis in this guide.

Ives began to communicate his aesthetic philosophy in his book published in 1920, *Essays Before a Sonata*, which defined his terms “manner” and “substance.” Many noteworthy authors have analyzed these aesthetic points in relation to the entirety of Ives’s creative work. I believe firmly that in these songs, manner and substance relate directly to the beginning singer’s breathing, their intentions, and

their connection to their personal experiences as they are expressed in singing.

William Brooks summarizes Ives's terms well in his article on Ives's Fourth

Symphony:

Substance and manner are interdependent. Substance requires manner to be articulated; manner is without value unless it reveals substance. . . . Music with substance offers the listener more than these surface characteristics, and requires his contribution; substance invites the listener to begin to discover the web of relationships that binds all manner into a universal whole. To be of substance, Ives reasons, music must not be fixed, static, finished. . . . One listens not only *through* the music but also *into* it.<sup>22</sup>

A most common concern among individual singers is self-comparison.

Because the voice is a large part of each individual's identity (one pattern among many that constitute an identity), asking for any change in that pattern is fraught with mistrust and intense judgment. Though understandable, this egotism is anathema to the healthy vocalism each teacher seeks because it harshly judges the identity of the singer with a "faulty" sound; the singer cannot help but take the criticism personally and intimately. The technical skills, and the singer's desire to improve them, cede importance to the outward impression on others.<sup>23</sup> One can read this in Ivesian terms as an over-emphasis on manner, or the first impression.

With a goal toward a more fully functioning vocalism in a more fully functioning person, the teacher can emphasize not self-comparison, but a deeper listening, or a deeper artistic sense of the substance that a beginner detects in other

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<sup>22</sup> William Brooks, "Unity and Diversity in Charles Ives's Fourth Symphony." *Yearbook for Inter-American Musical Research* 10 (1974): 5-6.

<sup>23</sup> This is the blindspot of the much-anthologized "prettier" songs mentioned above. Such melodious *breve gaudium* demonstrate the well-mannered far more than the substantive.

singers and their performances. Gerald Phillips writes in his excellent article on singers' courage that teachers can maintain a reverence for both the rational and the intuitive, or irrational, and "thereby accomplish two goals: (1) the students can build more positive perceptions of themselves; and (2) the students will have better tools and *greater courage* [italics mine] to become truly creative humans."<sup>24</sup>

The renowned Shakespearean coach Cicely Berry writes in her book "The Actor and His Text" about the self-perceptions of sound. She notes that the voice which a person "arrives at"—for it is always in flux—is an elaborate construction of the person's experiences, physicality, perception of sounds and force of personality:

That is to say, how we use our voice is conditioned by:  
 a) our environment and our attitude to that,  
 b) our perception of sound and the accuracy with which we hear it (our ear), and this is also involved with our aesthetic pleasure in sound and consequent judgement of it,  
 c) our individual physical make-up and agility, and our natural power, and  
 d) our own wish and need to communicate.<sup>25</sup>

The beginner often needs to be reminded that "breath powers every vocal sound."<sup>26</sup> The voice is used daily by most humans, but with the performance of an art song this voice becomes a strangely powerful, though familiar, thing. By explicitly connecting to the emotion in each phrase, the novice can remain grounded

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<sup>24</sup> Gerald L. Phillips, "Singing, Creativity, and Courage," *NATS Journal* 62 (November 2005): 160-161.

<sup>25</sup> Cicely Berry, *The Actor and His Text* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 15.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Caldwell and Joan Wall, eds., *Excellence in Singing: Multilevel Learning and Multilevel Teaching*, vol. 2 of *Mastering the Fundamentals* (Redmond, WA: Caldwell, 2001), 45.

and expressive. With just a moment of directed imagination, the singer can find an emotion in each phrase that they feel is true to the music and text, even if it sustains itself over several phrases. By asking the student to “inhale the emotion” of that phrase, one helps them to realize that the quality of their inhalation—the velocity, the dynamic even—expresses the emotional content of the following phrase.<sup>27</sup> This important realization can unlock the years of inarticulate emotions that surely plague each young singer.

To encourage artistic awareness, it is important to encourage students’ powers of observation of other performers and, perhaps most importantly, to encourage the wide consumption of the other art forms in the history of human expression. In those forms the range of human emotion can be sensed and calibrated, liked or disliked, approved of or disapproved, resonated with or rejected. As they listen and read, the novice singers can begin to mark which emotions seem easier for them to understand. Then they begin to identify which emotions they can most easily express themselves. It is with these that they can be encouraged to tinker. For each personality, the differing degrees of expression resonate in slightly different ways. Above all, novices need to be reminded that clarity of expression is the goal.

The stylistic advice Ives has for performers of his music has mostly to do with approach and musical precision rather than specific musical gestures.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>28</sup> In the author’s opinion one can generally forego the *bel canto* ideals when singing these songs, though clear diction, legato phrasing, and a balanced chiaroscuro resonance still remain a priority.

Generally, the beginner must work toward musical precision. But, the beginner singing these songs is asked to bring extra-musical thoughts and understanding to the performance of them. For example, the song “Two Little Flowers” may resonate with the individual who has observed young girls at play, or has enjoyed the beauty of rare flowers. This memory can actively be called upon to more accurately intensify the imagination and breath of the singer. A low energy breath, a slouching breath, or a passive breath do not create expressive singing. However, a pleased or astonished breath more expressively powers a description of beautiful girls playing.

The comments of John Kirkpatrick, whom Ives knew well, as included in Vivian Perlis’s oral history of Charles Ives, are noteworthy here: “Ordinarily his performers had practically carte blanche to do anything they wanted. His supposition was that if your heart was in the right place, and if you were really devoted in an idealistic way to the music itself, anything you did would have a certain validity, comparable to the validity of what he himself would do in the situation.”<sup>29</sup> One must remain within the composer’s intentions, however, and the teacher is best equipped to guide the beginner in this stylistic way.

Wholeheartedly, Charles Ives would agree with the renowned French baritone Pierre Bernac: “A work of music, which is only a piece of writing, is a cheque drawn on the fund of talent of a possible performer.”<sup>30</sup> The qualities of the

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<sup>29</sup> John Kirkpatrick in Vivian Perlis, *Charles Ives Remembered: An Oral History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 218.

<sup>30</sup> Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Art Song* (New York: Norton & Co., 1970), 1, quoting the poet and philosopher Paul Valéry.

possible performer were vitally important to Charles Ives. David Wooldridge notes that Ives describes his ideal many times, though often by negative phrases: not an “operatic greyhound,” not “nice celebrated organists,” not “highly-known singers,” and not “pretty voices [who] take a mountain and make a spongecake out of it.”<sup>31</sup> In a fascinating moment in Perlis’s oral history, Bigelow Ives recalls that his uncle, Charles, “scolded him for not shouting loud enough when performing one of his songs, growling ‘Can’t you shout better than that? That’s the trouble with this country—people are afraid to shout!’”<sup>32</sup> This should not be directly applied to vocal technique, of course, but it does indicate a vital ingredient of the spirit with which Ives wanted his songs performed. Martha Elliott describes a similar preference in Benjamin Britten in her book on style in singing, “A big, beautiful, creamy voice was not as important to Britten as the character in the voice. He once said, ‘Frankly, I’m not interested in beautiful voices as such. I’m interested in the person behind the voice.’”<sup>33</sup>

Ives writes in his *Memos* that a singer should have the simple ability to “sing the right notes at the right time.”<sup>34</sup> The latter especially applies to the beginning

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<sup>31</sup> David Wooldridge, *From the Steeples and Mountains* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 43.

<sup>32</sup> Bigelow Ives, in Perlis, *Ives Remembered*, 82.

<sup>33</sup> Martha Elliott, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 276. She continues to quote him, “Most important was the singer’s ability to communicate character and drama: ‘The singers must, of course, have good voices, but these should be used to interpret the music, not for self-glorification.’”

<sup>34</sup> Charles E. Ives, *Memos*, ed. John Kirkpatrick (New York : W. W. Norton, 1972), 142.

singer, since all potential artistry is founded on the basic precision of the right notes at the right time. With such a hand as Ives, with so many details shading so many meanings in the melodies and harmonies, the beginning singer is advised to embrace the challenge rather than resist it. Enthusiasm in this way corresponds to Ives's stylistic concerns that the performer bring their music to his music.

### Art song vs. folk song vs. pop song

It greatly benefits the novice singer to differentiate the art song, folk song and pop song, and the teacher often notices the stylistic tendencies from the latter two genres in the beginner's vocalism. For the purposes of this guide, it is vital to differentiate the vocalisms of all three. Either folk or pop song performance will be the novice singer's initial experience of music; very rarely will it be art song. This is so because of the rarity of live art song performance compared to the other two genres, and the much lower distribution of recordings of art song performances, but mostly it is due to the comparatively high barriers to comprehension of art song. Poetically, musically, and timbrally, the art song requires of the ideal singer the lengthy classical training and discipline that is uncommon or even undesirable in the other two forms mentioned.

As mentioned before, the challenge of finding more of the beginning singer's voice largely depends on their enthusiasm toward training. This section seeks to recognize the value of their musical experiences before entering training, and to use that as an introduction to Ives's songs. Among the songs in this guide, a good example of a less sustained song that yet requires expressive singing is "Waltz." The



teacher may suggest that this song be sung like a pop song, to a certain extent. With great comic potential written into it, the song allows for a tragicomic note or two to sneak in at the end. The vocalism required is not as sustained over a large range as “Feldeinsamkeit” or “There is a Lane.” Because “Waltz” is less classical, more comedic, but still expressive, it may encourage the enthusiasm of the beginner. A useful group from these selected songs that tracks across the continuum from a more popular style to a more classical style would be “Waltz,” “Slow March,” “An Old Flame,” “Songs My Mother Taught Me,” and “Feldeinsamkeit.”

Although singers of pop and folk song tacitly accept the truth that words with music have profound power, the art song requires an attentiveness to detail that is of a different kind and intensity than those. The overlap among the three song genres is considerable, except when considering tone, language, variety, and vocal range. In her book on the genre of art song, Barbara Meister notably describes the value of art song: “First, there is a degree of intimacy that is seldom equaled in other kinds of music, for the singer and the accompanist, with a minimum of extramusical gesture, must communicate to the audience the most subtle and evanescent emotions as expressed in the poem and music. Second, there is a partnership between singer and accompaniment that makes of the art song the most sensitive type of collaboration.”<sup>35</sup>

This refers to the resonance of individual experience as a distillation of poetic and musical momentousness. “Words make you think a thought. Music makes you feel a feeling. A song makes you feel a thought.” This memorable saying is attributed

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<sup>35</sup> Barbara Meister, *An Introduction to Art Song* (New York: Taplinger, 1980), 13.

to E. Y. “Yip” Harburg, lyricist for “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?,” “April in Paris,” and “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” who worked often with Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen and many others. Art song composers enter that momentum with the poet’s voice and begin to create a new whole from the two parts.<sup>36</sup> Suffice it to say, profound expression can be had in all three genres, but this guide points to the primacy of art song and in it the frequency of profound expression experienced.

As the teacher guides the beginner towards the art song genre and toward more substantially expressive singing, it benefits the relationship of the teacher and singer to briefly discuss the different types of song and how they best achieve their aims. Because the novice singer has almost invariably come to classical singing via pop, folk, or religious singing the expressive demands of classical singing often seem unusually extended and intense. It seems important to note here that, although the student has connected with music before beginning vocal training, and the connection occurred with poetic and melodic significance at that time, the awareness of the more profound submissions of art songs is so often hidden from them.<sup>37</sup> The teacher must act as a guide into this unknown genre.

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<sup>36</sup> Ives wrote several of his own texts, but usually the art song involves fewer individuals at its creation, which highlights the intentions of the poet and composer above folk or pop song.

<sup>37</sup> As mentioned, the receptive, and naïve, listener connects with an astonishing array of music and word before entering training. One of the classical singing teacher’s tasks is to awaken the critical faculties of poetry, expression, and lyricism. A fruitful first step is to distinguish unamplified lyricism from well-amplified cooing. The student can compare a love aria’s translation to a pop singer’s “text.” The distinctions consist not of subject matter or even syntax, but that of the continuum and depth of passionate expression with Britney Spears at one end and perhaps Verdi at the other end.

Since the daily usage of the speaking voice very rarely involves sustaining vowels and poetic phrases, the student must be carefully introduced to the ideals found in classical singing. They can be shown, in excellent art song performances, that intense emotion is conveyed with prolonged vowels, precise word-images and, at climactic moments, intensely powerful resonance. These traits are sometimes found in folk song and pop song, but their ubiquity in art song separates this genre from the former two.

The process of achieving more expressive performance goals invariably becomes intensely personal for the artist. It requires a collection of precise observations and intuitions drawn from the performer's life. Then, deftly synthesized, this understanding of gestural importance magnifies the artistic choices of the poet and composer. Ives sensed this, writing in a letter to Henry Bellamann that, "There can be nothing '*exclusive*' about a substantial art. It comes directly out of the heart of experience of life and thinking about life and living life."<sup>38</sup> For the receptive beginner, this Ivesian call to them, at the doorsill of their training, will certainly spike enthusiasm upward, because it allows their prior music experiences to directly link to this new classical style.

If the teacher ventures to discuss the common ground among pop, folk, and art songs, the student may find more willingness to fully enter the classical vocal style. I believe that when the teacher demonstrates some empathy for the difficulty of the task, the student finds more willingness and enthusiasm to work. Berry

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<sup>38</sup> Henry Bellamann, "Charles Ives: The Man and His Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 19 (January 1933): 48.

addresses this struggle to improve when she says, "It is curiously difficult to work on our own voice both boldly and creatively, because it means we have to let go of our own patterns. . . . It is the means by which we commit our private world to the world outside, it is tied up with how we think of ourselves—our self-image—and with the image of ourselves we wish to present."<sup>39</sup> These songs provide a bridge from the beginner's sense of vocalism to the classical idiom's.

### Expressing sentimentality and irony in selected songs of Charles Ives

#### Expressing sentimentality

This section provides a brief introduction on expressing sentimentality and irony in the selected songs in this guide. This section seeks to begin distinguishing from among the many forms of expressive singing that inculcate the beginner's ear via cheaply sentimental or infantile means. Expressing sentimentality and irony is key to expressing these songs well. The beginning student has undoubtedly experienced the sentimental or ironic when listening to a song, but expressing irony and sentimentality themselves requires more specific awareness of the clear mechanics involved.

Ives valued expressive art music that could sincerely express sentimentality, more specifically the sentimentality of domestic harmony. Depictions of domestic harmony can be clearly seen in the songs about children such as "The Children's Hour" and "Two Little Flowers." These compositional gestures were bound with his fierce beliefs about the importance of memory contrasted with the saccharine

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<sup>39</sup> Berry, *The Actor and His Text*, 16.

moments created by sentimentalists in “nice and neat” music (from his song “On the Counter”).<sup>40</sup> Though contradictory on the surface, these separate sentimentalities that Ives holds up for observation have many values, akin to a scrapbook, as David Metzger notes in his article on childhood and Ives: “This analogy captures the nostalgia surrounding the composer's quotations, as the souvenir collector derives pleasure from relating the surviving object to an original period or event, a connection involving the nostalgic negotiation of past and present.”<sup>41</sup>

This jostles with a more philosophical definition of sentimentality:

A sentimental response is a response that is based on a false picture of the world, and furthermore one which we adopt “under the guidance of a desire for gratification and reassurance.” . . . We *want* to feel in certain ways, and so we selectively and deliberately (though not necessarily consciously) misrepresent the world to ourselves so that we *can* feel in those ways.<sup>42</sup>

These two facets of sentimentality are the largely negative aspects of sentimentality. Conversely, as Deborah Knight demonstrates in her fascinating article on sentimentality, the near universal condemnation of sentimentality, as it refers to low art, is easily flipped onto its own sentimentality. “Impressionist artwork on cups, towels, calendars . . . part of what makes up our general appreciation of “high art” is that it has been sentimentalized, or made important

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<sup>40</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 518.

<sup>41</sup> David Metzger, “‘We Boys’: Childhood in the Music of Charles Ives,” *19th-Century Music* 21 (Summer 1997): 81.

<sup>42</sup> Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley, introduction to section on Sentimentality, in *Arguing About Art: Contemporary Philosophical Debates*, ed. Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley, 2nd Ed. (Routledge: New York, 2002), 313.

because of our emotional (and not just cognitive) engagement with it.

Awkwardnesses enter when viewing the historical presentations: one generation's avant-garde can certainly be a later generation's kitsch."<sup>43</sup> She notes that behaving sentimentally, or consuming sentimental art, signals a lowered moral and aesthetic sensibility. The keywords here are predictable, predigested, programmed.<sup>44</sup>

Ives often thwarts the sentimental reading of his songs by simply being more intense. Though his sentimental songs use the idiom of parlour songs, he intensifies them almost to the visionary level. So, his sentimentality is not predigested or intended to misrepresent merely for beauty's sake. Authenticity matters greatly to the young singer, and recognition of this in Ives's songs may unlock some of the artistry the teacher seeks. For example, in the song "Two Little Flowers," there is a dislocated metric hiccup in the flow of rhythm and melody that forestalls the sentimental reading. At the song's end, this tension is resolved into a consonant cadence, and we hear it as more genuine emotional expression.

Unless a singer begins to identify the true shapes and powers of expressive singing in all its invisible forms, they may well content themselves with the merely pretty, or merely impressive sounds. These empty sounds come from a singer who has become disconnected from the human desire to express the sustaining variations of spirit, emotion and being. Ives clearly despised this petty tendency in singers and the audiences who clamored for them. As stated above, the substantive

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<sup>43</sup> Deborah Knight, "Why We Enjoy Condemning Sentimentality: A Meta-aesthetic Perspective," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57 (Autumn, 1999): 415.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 411.

demands in the selected songs of this guide challenge the singer to convey authentic emotions, though their technical study is just beginning.

Ives sought, possibly, more charisma in the performer. In his book on acting and singing, Wesley Balk advises that we separate charisma “into components: intense concentration, extraordinary technical skill, great personal confidence, and an openness (vulnerability) which lets all these flow OUTWARD (emphasis original).”<sup>45</sup> The powerful singer-actor, however, combines clear meaning and commitment to each word and phrase with a beautiful sound. Commitment to the word, in Ives’s perspective, far outweighs vocal beauty. As Balk describes it, “Singer-actors must sensitize themselves to the emotional meanings of the musical shapes and sounds they sing. By increasing their awareness of how spoken language can be shaped musically in communicating meaning more clearly, they will assist this sensitizing process.”<sup>46</sup>

For the novice, this intense ideal likely intimidates as much as it appeals. Though they are familiar with, and perhaps experienced in, stage acting, the realm of *acting as singers* is foreign. Quite simply, they can be shown this aspect of the musically profound at the beginning of their study via recordings and live demonstrations. In scores of guides, the singer-actor can gain useful exercises and tips about acting while singing.

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<sup>45</sup> Wesley Balk, *The Complete Singer-Actor: Training for Music Theater* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 53.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

## Expressing irony

Often sarcasm and irony sit side by side on the page in Ives's songs. With sarcastic footnotes, Ives gives the performers extra-musical footing to convey the musical irony in his songs. As H. Wiley Hitchcock observes, these verbal commentaries have been the "subject of comment ever since they were printed," and garnered Ives the label of "the American Satie, joker par excellence."<sup>47</sup> As Cassandra Carr puts it in her article on Ivesian humor, he exaggerates and distorts the musical clichés, and creates space for caricature of both compositional and performance styles.<sup>48</sup>

For example, in the satirical song "Romanzo (di Central Park)" the singer will convey the one-word end-rhymes with sincere sentiment, but the irony does not occur in their depiction. It occurs, rather, in the minds of the listeners as they combine Ives's musical material with their knowledge of the clichés of the late nineteenth century salon song, parodied in many later works. And importantly, they have read the paragraph printed above the song with the quotation from Leigh Hunt (this may be printed in the program notes for clearest effect).

In rhymed pairs, the murmuringly pathetic singer sketches a scene of roving in a grove at night, with delight, while hearts impart and "prove" their love to each other with a kiss and successive bliss, commenting afterwards that they are blest and should rest. In the paragraph before the song, Ives agrees with Hunt that one

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<sup>47</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 394.

<sup>48</sup> Cassandra I. Carr, "Charles Ives's Humor as Reflected in His Songs," *American Music* 7 (1989): 125.



requires no more than the rhymes of such “poems” to be acquainted with “the whole of them.”

Hunt calls it a “Love Song,” but Ives notes that when it is attached—attached, not composed or set—to music it becomes a “Morceau de Coeur” (“piece of the heart”) or an “Intermezzo Table d’hôte” (literally, a character piece that suits the host’s table, or a widely appealing and decorous piece). These ridiculing terms point to the clichéd, readymade quality of the sentiments that had become so popular among the parlour song anthologies of the previous decades.

Indeed, many of these had titles such as “Pearls” or “Gems” among other precious descriptions. At the end of the song Ives includes a note lacerating Victor Herbert—“Victor Herbert!!—lily-white hands and diamonds!”—and his fan a “sure-minded critic of New York,” for the influence that Herbert wielded as a “great composer.”<sup>49</sup> This lines up with many of Ives’s jibes at critics who are “enthusiastic over [their] enthusiasms.”<sup>50</sup>

Sarcastically, Ives calls the text “beautiful.”<sup>51</sup> The speaker believes it is a life-altering experience, but the music and the poem undercut that view, trimming it down to an entertaining comment on the limitations of parlour songs. By expressing the words sincerely, rather than knowingly, the singer can make the ironic picture of the song clearer to the listener. It is vital that the singer conveys the words in a sincere manner, without a wink or nod.

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<sup>49</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 424. Harmony Twichell Ives identified the critic as Henry T. Finck, according to John Kirkpatrick in his copy of *Fourteen Songs*.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

Parlour songs are the clear objects of parody for this song. They were regularly programmed by major classical singers for recitals and included in anthologies for home use. Importantly, if the listener, or the young singer, has no knowledge of those songs or of the genre, then the satirical effect is lost, and with it the entire import of the song.

For the novice singer, it is important to understand the effects of sarcasm and irony in performance, and to separately understand them. Sarcasm places the speaker in a distant, knowledgeable, and often defensive position. By contrast, in an ironic instance, the speaker is most often unaware of the irony. Though the intense expression of sarcasm is superficial and mocking, the convincing portrayal of dramatic irony grounds the speaker in the profoundly universal aspects of human experience. Sarcasm is most often verbal, and the creator clearly intends it, but irony is most often invisible to the character and created with multiple contributors, including natural events.

In his excellent book for singing actors, Ostwald describes the irony found in hyper-farcical roles: "Instead of an empathetic bond based on feelings, hyper-farcical roles substitute a bond between characters and audience that is grounded in irony or intellectual understanding. . . . Some exist with an awareness of themselves as entertainers. . . . Once you are freed from the boundaries of believability you are faced with difficult decisions as to how outlandish you should be."<sup>52</sup> In only a few satirical songs of Ives does this apply, for instance in "Romanzo (di Central Park)"

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<sup>52</sup> Ostwald, *Acting for Singers*, 153.

and “A Song—for Anything.” One must encourage the hesitant student to welcome the more bizarre gestures of voice and body as appropriate in these songs.

Though the novice singer has likely gained an understanding of the nuances and usage of sarcasm via pop culture, these tools are not expressly useful in classical singing. That said, the novice singer can likely appreciate, from their personal experiences, the intense need for Charles Ives to use sarcasm in his life. Hitchcock argues that “such comments by Ives . . . are ineluctably bound up with his rejection of art for art’s sake and spring from his willingness—his eagerness!—to relate his songs to the world around him, to the social, political, or musical ambience surrounding them, or to the circumstances of their composition, and sometimes even to protest their value and suggest that they be not sung.”<sup>53</sup> So, one sees that the sarcasm points to the underlying, and passionate, philosophy Ives wrote about so abundantly. This gives a cue to the novice that the music is substantial and that a vibrant person created it.

The irony in these songs can be extra-musical. To return to the example in “Romanzo (di Central Park),” which Hitchcock describes as a “sassy spoof of turn-of-the-century love songs,” Ives takes a sarcastic “poem” of Leigh Hunt and writes a song that requires only 6 notes of the singer’s middle range and moves mostly by step or small interval. Though with a slightly chromatic and asymmetrical melody, it is meant to be sung passionately and sincerely. The irony is clearly observable in the trite vocabulary of monosyllables. Ives also notes below the first measures that “Men with high, liquid notes and lady sopranos may sing an octave higher than

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<sup>53</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 394.

written. The voice part of this ‘Aria,’ however, may be omitted with good effect.” Ives sarcastically calls it an “Aria” though the range is limited and the lyricism stunted. He acknowledges this by placing the word in quotation marks.

The mental and physical attitude of the singer is essential to clarifying the irony of the speaker’s position in this song. The irony is not to be portrayed by the singer, but observed by the audience. Therefore, the singer can only convey the irony if they commit fully to the actions that the text suggests. One observes that half-commitment does not lead to expression of half-irony, but rather to vague communication. One common error of the inexperienced singer is to feel an emotion intensely, rather than communicate it intensely. The teacher can instruct the student to focus on expressing the text with specific physical and facial gestures, while remaining calmly in control in their mind. For many students this will be a challenge, but the assistance of both a videorecorder and a mirror give impartial feedback to the self-conscious singer.

Specifically in this song, the late night tryst gives the singer many options for coquettish and sentimentally “romantic” gestures. These gestures accrue to sketch the scene of the lovers kissing and blissing. The singer most effectively communicates when they remain in the moment of each word and action. Ostwald reminds us that “any single action can be ambiguous . . . but if you do several actions, the audience can usually deduce what you are feeling.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ostwald, *Acting for Singers*, 13.

Another example of this challenge is in the song “The Side-Show.”<sup>55</sup>

Here, Ives has two targets in one song: the quintuple meter waltz from Tchaikovsky’s *Pathétique* Symphony, second movement, and the text and music of the very popular comic song by Pat Rooney, “Is that You, Mr. Riley?” (or “Are You the O’Reilly” of 1883).<sup>56</sup> The singer notes the intention of Ives was to jab the eminent Russian composer by juxtaposing his melody with the “lowness” of the popular song. Ives held Tchaikovsky in low regard and this suggests that Ives respected Rooney (and his song “Riley”) more than Tchaikovsky.<sup>57</sup> As Burkholder explains in his detailed study of Ivesian techniques, the text is not merely illustrated by the quotation of a cello theme from the *Pathétique* Symphony, but rather, the cleverness lies in the text commenting on the transformation occurring in the music at that time. A resemblance between popular song and symphonic theme is Ives’s main point here, with the metrical change that transforms one into the other, and the relative values of popular American song and European art music.<sup>58</sup>

The joke may likely be lost on listeners who cannot immediately recall the cello theme in the Tchaikovsky reference, but all is not lost as there is still plenty of comedic material in the song. For example, the limping nature of the song can be highlighted by the performers: in m. 2 of piano with the sixteenth rest (and

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<sup>55</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 468.

<sup>56</sup> Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 76. The melodic resemblance of the two tunes and the linear combination of them is illuminated by Burkholder on pp. 76-79.

<sup>57</sup> Ives, *Essays*, 99.

<sup>58</sup> Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 79.

following), and the singer's m. 4, the foreshortened initial eighth note (and following). The piano figuration encourages a ham-fisted approach for best effect (it is doubtful one can take this too far). Additionally, the singer is encouraged to avoid the best classical diction and almost speak the text on the pitches. If this is observed and the rhythmic limp is exaggerated, then the whole "collegiate" joke is carried (Example 7).<sup>59</sup> As the song is only approximately thirty seconds in length, this song makes a superb non sequitur for a recital group.

### Example 7

115. THE SIDE SHOW

[Charles Ives]

*In a moderate waltz time* *mf*

“Is — that Mis- ter Ri- ley, who

5 keeps the ho- tel?” is the tune that ac- comp-’nies the trot- ting-track

Finally, an example from Ives’s songs that has no comparison in art song, “A Song—For Anything.” Ives considered it of “little or no musical value,” but he has

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 76.

created an excellent opportunity for the young singer to demonstrate their vocal acting abilities, their command of colors and styles. The appended paragraph to this song includes a description: “This song is a common illustration (and not the only one herein) of how inferior music is inclined to follow inferior words, and vice-versa. The music was originally written to the sacred words printed first here (and the best of the three texts).”<sup>60</sup> One finds the irony to be played by adding to the musical notation some stylistic enhancements (see Style Sheet for this song). It is in this way that the three layers of each verse are collated in the audience’s mind and remarked upon. The lack of substance in such readymade songs triggers Ives’s passionate dismissal of them and, notwithstanding Ives’s judgment, makes this an interesting song, especially in performance.

The irony to be found in a song cannot be expressed by the singer or pianist themselves. As any sarcastic comment would break the tissue of illusion, the performers must do their utmost to maintain focus and commitment to the textual atmosphere. The audience connects the elements of the performance in their minds, and thereby observes the irony. Ostwald advises three important things in this way for the novice to focus upon: (1) play the minutiae of what is really happening, (2) recognize that your music is your character’s feelings (and vice-versa), and (3) acknowledge that your characters believe they’re real people.<sup>61</sup> Most novice singers will find an exhilarating feeling when they fully commit to this mode of performance.

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<sup>60</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 3.

<sup>61</sup> Ostwald, *Acting for Singers*, 4.

Above all, the student is encouraged to commit to the texts of each song, and with agility and energy convey the words with the melody. Expressive vocalism and more beautiful singing result from this freedom of mind and mechanism. Ives's idea of music as a journey is echoed in Berry's idea of the movement of words and thoughts:

The words themselves are the journey to be lived through. . . . Once you can be behind each word as you say it, neither pressing it or describing it, each word having its own room—its own stillness if you like—then the language becomes active and interesting. . . . To sum up quite practically: through breath and verbal muscularity we must be so free that there is no sense of pressing the sound out. We must not, through lack of trust either in ourselves or in the text, over-control the language.<sup>62</sup>

Expressive singing requires of the beginning singer a commitment to change a pattern of their identity, as Berry described above. This willingness is based upon a certain amount of trust in the person asking them to change this pattern. Once trusted, a practical problem confronting the teacher is the level of familiarity, or knowledge, that a student is comfortable engaging with a song. In the author's experience, this knowledge of the song often stops at a superficial level of the song. It rests on the misconception that expressive singing in art song is pretty much just pretty sounds.

To that end, the next chapter of *Style Sheets* describes the expressive aims of selected songs of Charles Ives, and how they encourage the beginning student to build the expressive tools that are applicable throughout the rest of their singing life. The recognition of irony and sentimentality in these songs sharpens the

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<sup>62</sup> Berry, *The Actor and His Text*, 30.



perception of the singer as they continue to study other songs in the canon. With more freely energized breath and with clearer ideas about what occurs in the phrases of these songs, these singers can begin the honing of their expressive singing skills at an earlier stage than they are likely to with the current songs available.

## CHAPTER 2

### Style Sheets

The more challenging songs of Ives, such as “General William Booth Enters into Heaven,” “Charlie Rutlage,” and “The Cage,” are daunting in their notation and performance demands. They tend to fail the eye test for the beginning singer or the teacher of beginning singers. Yet behind these intimidating songs lie other songs that perfectly suit the needs of these singers, and some of those best suited are described here in this guide.

The average length of the selected songs is just under two minutes, the acting challenges of mood-sustaining and presence are specific and intense but brief, and the ranges of each song sit in the medium range of most young men and women. Also, the rhythmic and melodic difficulties of these selected songs will gently challenge the novice, without overwhelming. This guide has selected the songs listed in Table 1 to assist the teacher and singer in developing the expressive skills needed for Ives’s songs as well as for other canonic repertoire.

**Table 1. Selected songs**

Title	Length (approximate)
1) Two Little Flowers	1'20"
2) Afterglow	2'15
3) Waltz	1'45
4) The World's Wanderers	1'45
5) A Song—For Anything	2'
6) Autumn	2'15
7) An Old Flame	2'15
8) Songs My Mother Taught Me	2'15
9) Du Alte Mutter	2'15
10) A Night Song	45"
11) There Is a Lane	1'15
12) Slow March	2'

13)	Berceuse	1'30
14)	Feldeinsamkeit	3'15)
	1'30"	To Edith
16)	Spring Song	1'
17)	Romanzo (di Central Park)	1'30
18)	The Side Show	30"
19)	The Light That Is Felt	1'45

The following are recommendations for the individual songs of Charles Ives that have been selected according to the following criteria: brevity, mood, technical challenge (such as singing *sostenuto* or *pianissimo*), musicianship (rhythm and pitch difficulties), and expressive possibilities. The style sheets offer close observations of the score markings, and recommendations for the singer to note as they work on the song. Emphasis is given to working on the songs without making a singing sound (text study, recitation); lining up the emotional breath (experimentation per phrase); sharpening the intense desire to express precisely what is in the music (precise rhythm and melodic study); and conveying all of these with apparent ease and economy.<sup>1</sup>

The style sheets were created using H. Wiley Hitchcock's edition of *129 Songs* (2004), but all of the songs discussed in the style sheets may also be found in the collection *114 Songs* that Ives had printed privately in 1922, and which is available in a relatively inexpensive reprint from 1975 (with added copyright notices). Additionally, there are various reprints of collected songs (in song groups of three to fifty) from 1922 until 1993 when Kirkpatrick's critical edition of *Forty Earlier*

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<sup>1</sup> All texts given here are from the "Appendix: The Texts of *129 Songs*," in Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, beginning on p. 485.

*Songs* was published.<sup>2</sup> Because Ives had “practically no editorial assistance in the production and proofreading of his songs,” they were edited inconsistently at best, according to Hitchcock.<sup>3</sup> The differentiations among the editions affect several songs in this guide due to corrections Hitchcock made. Some songs, such as “Afterglow” for example, are printed on one page in *114 Songs* (p. 86) but two pages in *129 Songs* (pp. 275-76). This change is welcome, as the precise reading of the dense layout of this song in *114 Songs* proves difficult for the beginning student.

#### Style Sheet for “Two Little Flowers”

poem by Harmony Twichell Ives (1876-1969), with Charles Ives

On sunny days in our backyard,  
 two little flowers are seen,  
 One dressed, at times, in brightest pink  
 and one in green.  
 The marigold is radiant,  
 the rose passing fair;  
 The violet is ever dear,  
 the orchid, ever rare;  
 There's loveliness in wild flowers  
 of field or wide savannah,  
 But fairest, rarest of them all  
 are Edith and Susanna.

This song tests the singer’s rhythmic abilities and gently challenges the range. The singer must express the innocence and wonder of the scene while maintaining the correct rhythms. Also important, the student can be directed to research the two girls in the poem, Edith and Susanna, and their relationship to the

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<sup>2</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, xvii-xxvi presents an extensive clarification of the issue, including several tables cross-referencing many publications of the songs.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

composer. Doing this research—from noticing that there is a historical background to investigate, to figuring out how to find appropriate sources, to teasing out the clues and identifying the girls—will serve to draw students into the song, and thereby gain a firmer footing as performers.

In this song Ives uses the common left-hand ostinato gesture of art song to a different effect than as a mere backdrop for a melody. The arpeggio figure is an ostinato of seven eighth notes, but it is three and a half beats of the 4/4 meter of this song. Unaware of this at first hearing, the listener perceives a subtle jostling of rhythmic pulse as the voice enters above the texture of the piano. The voice bumps into the contrametric ostinato as the melody begins to follow its “own” meter.

Occasionally, the voice and initial beat of the ostinato synchronize in a more normal way, but mostly it is playfully off-beat. For example, Ives synchronizes the implied downbeat of the piano with the actual downbeat of the voice at mm. 11, 15, and 19, beginning the fifth, seventh, and ninth lines of the poem. But at m. 13 (“passing fair”) and m. 17 (“ever rare”), he flips this around and hurries up the voice to line it up with the ostinato. This playfulness parallels the playfulness of the two girls in the poem, and the irregularity and avoidance of expectations makes the music fresh and keeps it from becoming predictable or clichéd.

The last two lines, mm. 23-26, where the point of the poem focuses, Ives switches to patterns of four eighth notes, bringing the piano and voice together to make an emotional point. He indulges in sentiment here not cheaply or sentimentally—but perhaps in a gesture of real love—by moving from the ostinato’s gentle perturbations to a traditional cadencing motion. The singer and pianist must

be aware of this important moment. Burkholder sees the possible reference to Alexander R. Reinagle's hymn tune *St. Peter* at the beginning and end of the melody, noting later that, for Ives, a closing section that returns to diatonic melody in a steady cadence from constant harmonic motion and chromatic movement represents a sense of comfort in the "all-receiving breast" of God.<sup>4</sup> This consonance, or reassurance, at the end in the music and poem had profound domestic and spiritual meaning for Ives.

The shape of the entire song arcs from the initial bump, through an extended metaphor in an appreciative, sequential near monotone, to a four-square cadence that rests lightly on the ear, and heavily in the heart. This sentiment is neither cheap, nor ironic, nor easily gotten at by the performers or listeners. This unsettling and resettling of the song's first sounds gives the performer a key to the implications Ives set forth in his setting of this sentimental poem. Resting on the domesticity of the ostinato, these implications sustain themselves with the easily rising and falling arc of the melody. Unsettling to the ear that expects normal gestures, Ives provides with the seven-note ostinato a more compelling portrait of domestic happiness. The combination of the sentimental poem comparing the two girls to flowers with the perturbed piano figuration gives the listener a more three dimensional picture to contemplate. Burkholder notes that "in the New England culture of Ives, understatement is often the way the most important things are said most strongly. In performing the conclusion of this song the singer must not state the final two lines of the poem with any more emotion than the rest, as this will rob them of their

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<sup>4</sup> Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 289-91.

power.”<sup>5</sup> Restraint here calls to mind the restraint of the most expressive *mélodie*, or French art song, which the student will likely soon begin to study.

The successful performance of this song relies on the joint rhythmic precision from singer and pianist. Singing legato phrases while maintaining a clear word-image challenges the novice singer in whatever style in which they might sing. But for this song, the novice must first solve the rhythmic demands before any sense of ease can be projected toward the audience. A slower tempo, at the first rehearsal, will improve this rhythmic precision.

It is always fruitful to separate the elements of the song and perfect them before returning everything to its place in the unified whole. By speaking the poem in and out of the song’s rhythm, repeatedly, the speaker gains a feel for the sense that Ives gave the words in the melody he created, but also this allows the singer to begin crafting their own sense within the melody. As Dorothy Uris describes it neatly in her book on English Diction, what is crucial is the ability of the singer to sing the “sense” of the line, so that the important words are directed to the listener’s attention.<sup>6</sup>

Once the rhythm of the words is understood and rehearsed, the simplicity of delivery must be the focus. Exceptionally precise and relaxed articulators (jaw, lips, and tongue-tip) achieve this, as does the continued rehearsal of the song sung only on the vowels within the words. Such practice enhances the legato aims mentioned

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<sup>5</sup> Burkholder, email to author, January 2, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Dorothy Uris, *To Sing in English: A Guide to Improved Diction* (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1971), 20.

above. More importantly, the mood of the sentimental text must be committed to, and this is to be done with a serene facial posture and calm arms and hands. The tone must not toy with a fuller chiaroscuro timbre as this will give a different feel than sentimental and domestic.

Style Sheet for "Afterglow"

poem by James Fenimore Cooper, Jr. (1892-1918)

At the quiet close of day  
Gently yet the willows sway;  
    When the sunset light is low,  
    Lingers still the afterglow.

Beauty tarries loth to die,  
    Every lightest fantasy  
    Lovelier grows in memory,  
Where the truer beauties lie.

This song is particularly good for the beginning student who already has a good music reading skills from study of another instrument. The rhythmic and chromatic challenges in this song are not extensive, and the singer may gain a sense of satisfaction at having solved this puzzle of a song.

One of the more atmospheric and unified songs Ives has written, this song requires a deft performer to successfully energize the serene mood here. During rehearsals, the singer should err on the side of louder dynamics throughout this song. Until the properly energized breath propels each phrase, the singer will not fully re-create what Ives floated here. The performer must also understand the profound effect the introductory piano material will create, and match it with their stance and gaze, or their presence.



Two significant, extra-musical details are worth noting: (1) Burkholder observes the quotation of *Erie* set to the first and last lines of the poem.<sup>7</sup> Subdued, after the long introduction of the piano, the voice murmurs the first quotation in the middle register, but later, making the poetic point of the entire song, the last quotation is a tritone higher. (2) Hitchcock, the editor of *129 Songs*, demarcated the song to beats of the eighth note, substituting measure numbers with eighth note beats. We see the first number at the top of the second system: 31, which is the thirty-first eighth-note beat. Hitchcock continues with the numbers 57, 69, 81 and so on. In *114 Songs*, Ives did not enumerate the beats, and so the singer must rely on the words that are near the location being discussed.

The entire song knits together the poetic metaphor with the motion of the melody and the harmony beneath. For example, the word “loth” at beat 109 means reluctant, and refers to the seeming reluctance of the natural afterglow of a sunset to fade, as it somehow seems to grow and diminish simultaneously. The poet Cooper deepens this observation by comparing it to memory, highlighting this by placing the endpoint of the entire poem at the words “where the truer beauties lie.” As Kevin Kelly notes in his study of the cultural context of Ives’s songs, Cooper “enhances the tone of evening’s melancholy by including the popular death images of the willow and setting sun; other recurrent nineteenth-century concepts that he incorporates are nostalgia and beauty—especially beauty that resists dying.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 289.

<sup>8</sup> Kevin O. Kelly, “The Songs of Charles Ives and the Cultural Contexts of Death” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1989), 134.

Ives begins to highlight this natural metaphor at the word “Beauty” with the second chord of the second system, beat 102 (middle of third system in Ives’s original). A sequence of four chords (over G, F, B, and E repeating almost three full times through the word “memory”) provides an aural afterglow that one senses beneath the words as an enduring presence even while it dissipates. This congruence with the word-image of “every lightest fantasy” in memory growing lovelier interweaves the observation of memory growing simultaneously sharper and softer via chordal structure and rhythm.<sup>9</sup> There is a second layer to this phenomenon located in the melody: B A A F# G# B B, which occurs three times, starting on “-ty,” “Every,” and “Lovelier.” Though this pattern begins with the chord sequence mentioned above, it becomes uncoupled from the harmony because the first iteration takes six beats, and the second iteration five. So, with the piano moving steadily beneath it, the voice gradually moves in shorter phrases until new melodic material enters at the word “where.” This idea binds the text with harmony and melody so that the unified whole becomes more clearly expressive.

At beat 123 Ives encourages the singer to sustain the phrase by jumping ahead of the beat with the word “Lovelier.” Grammatically, and in scansion, this makes more sense than in following the model of the previous five lines and breathing then. The final lift, or breath mark at beat 142, indicated by Ives, must be handled carefully and smoothly so as not to leave the listener with an abrupt final note (just before the word “lie”). The final voiced s of the word “beauties” must not

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<sup>9</sup> Above that, the melody repeats its augmented sixth F-D#-A-C creating another layer of stasis with repetition, sounding like a French augmented 6th under the B in the voice at its first two appearances.

overwhelm the chord beneath, but still provide a clear word-image.

Ives draws the melody up to the C at only three moments in the poem: “When,” “Beau-[ty],” and “Where.” The singer, aware of this, need not make more of these notes than is written. The temptation of these highest notes in the melody is to give them more tone, or more voice, than the mood requires. Since Ives wrote no crescendo for any of these, the singer must maintain a simple steadiness of breath and dynamic.

The pianist will notice the marking at the bottom of the first page:<sup>10</sup> “the piano should be played as indistinctly as possible and both damper and soft pedals used almost constantly.” At beat 99 (just after the word “afterglow”), Ives indicates that the piano go from *pianissississimo* to *mezzo piano*, in a clear evocation of the efflorescent afterglow. This piece depends on delicate maneuvering by both performers to sustain an impulse in the mostly *pianissimo* texture of the music and words.

There is a strange notational idea that occurs in the passage from “Beauty tarries” to “Where,” where there are chords in both half notes and quarter notes. This notation is intended to blur the already indistinct and soft texture beneath the singer, so that each chord overlaps the following chord; the quarter notes articulate the rhythm and the half notes articulate the sustained overlapping texture in a very impressionistic effect. Hitchcock notes that this “indistinctness” Ives calls for in his

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<sup>10</sup>Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 275.

footnote “lends a kind of visual ‘weightiness’ to this setting of a favorite theme: the preciousness of memory.”<sup>11</sup>

### Style Sheet for "Waltz"

poem by Charles Edward Ives, glossing Michael Nolan (1867-1910)

Round and round the old dance ground  
Went the whirling throng, moved with wine and song;  
Little Annie Rooney (now Mrs. Mooney)  
Was as gay as birds in May - s'her Wedding Day.

Far and wide's the fame of the bride,  
Also of her beau, every one knows it's Joe;  
Little Annie Rooney (Mrs. J. P. Mooney)  
All that day, held full sway - o'er Av'nue A!  
("An old sweetheart")

The accessible rhythm and feel of this song will be a good bridge for a beginning singer that may be a good performer but not necessarily a good reader. This upbeat but melancholy song requires the singer to portray an observation of the energetic wedding crowd as they dance, and the contradictory mood of regret that the bride was once a sweetheart. Ives achieves this dual effect by simply presenting one mood after the other. The waltz rhythm is maintained throughout, but the contrasting dynamics communicate the different levels of the mood. Since the song is of a narrative type, the clear presentation of the words is key. In such a brief song, each word carries more expressive importance.

The happy wedding music still echoes in the speaker's mind, as it occurs in the past tense of "that day." The speaker cannot help but remember all of the happy

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 453.

details of the day, and even the feeling that the groom is very well-known and well-liked. The final three words “an old sweetheart” give the entire song a sad button that is foreshadowed earlier in the song, in Ives’s treatment.

The beginning singer is challenged in this song with specific dynamic changes, and the subtext that Ives has written. Ives seems to require some change of physical gesture after the first phrase, as he writes a change in dynamic at m. 17 from *mezzo forte* to *piano*, which remains unchanged thereafter. The singer will heighten the contrast by singing almost *forte* at the first phrase and then change to the muttering, sad *piano* dynamic as indicated. After the second verse the codetta begins at m. 50 with an even softer, more wistful, dynamic of *pianissimo*. It indicates that Ives truly wanted a barely audible comment here, as the *pianissimo* decrescendos to nothing, with no chord after. Such an odd ending—asymmetrical and allowing the mood to extend far into the silence—gives the new singer a challenge to project the mood faithfully and hold silence before the audience applauds.

At the phrase “little Annie Rooney” the singer must change the expression again to convey the youthful infatuation, remembered so fondly. The next phrase holds the acid for the speaker, as they observe that the new name erased the old one. The singer can convey this with specific attention to the initial consonants of those phrases. One can easily imagine a clenching of teeth will convey the suppressed resentment.

The singer must understand that the event has passed, even though the music of the dancing sounds from the piano. This event takes place in the speaker’s

memory, which better facilitates the rapid dynamic changes. The singer must be attentive to the grand beginning to the song followed just eight measures later with a soft, introspective change of mood. This sustained piano texture maintains through the end of the song and what begins as a broad waltz ends as a soft and melancholy mutter. Robert Schumann composed a similar arc in his *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48 with “Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen,” wherein the speaker hears the wedding music swirling around, notices the type of dance even, remarks bitterly on it, and decrescendos into self-pity. Ives vignette is not so extreme, but, in the silence after the song ends, it leaves the listener wondering what the next move is. The singer can easily convey this feeling with an unwavering and distant stare.

Burkholder observes several key elements of this song. Based on the popular waltz song “Little Annie Rooney” by Michael Nolan, Ives comments upon that song—he could assume his listeners would know Nolan’s version—and uses the form of the waltz to highlight how artificially a popular song form could make the listener feel.<sup>12</sup> However, Ives diverges from Nolan’s sentimental original scene by detaching the speaker, and pointing out that the crowd, introduced first, is “moved with wine and song,” rather than by deeper feelings. So, the scene, and the music, become tawdrier with Ives’s treatment, and the narrator becomes more realistic and more sullen contemplating Little Annie Rooney.<sup>13</sup> Thus we hear the form of the waltz as a false note echoing the false behavior of the throng.

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<sup>12</sup> Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 270.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

The score marking *Tempo di Valse* will ensure that the tempo remains a medium waltz, which clears the words for delivery. A faster tempo puts too much pressure on the new singer to convey the apposite phrases quickly, and a slower tempo gives a leaden feeling to the song. However, a medium tempo allows the right space to adjust the singer's attitude, dynamic and facial expression to suit the aside. The pianist will notice the marking at m. 7 (*coll' 8va bassa ad lib.*), which Ives removes at m. 17 for the quieter section with the term "loco," which countermands the previous instruction (*8va bassa*). Ives reinstates the *coll' 8va bassa ad lib.* at m. 45. This small detail evokes a larger setting with louder piano for the party to "continue," of a sort. At mm. 41-44 he adds a compact, inner counterpoint to the piano to heighten the improvisatory feel of the pianist at the party or reception. So the viewpoint zooms back and forth from aside to observing or recalling the larger party. Finally it swings back to the very pensive, parenthetical expression that ends the song softly.

### Style Sheet for "The World's Wanderers"

poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Tell me, star, whose wings of light  
 Speed thee in thy fiery flight,  
 In what cavern of the night  
     Will thy pinions close now?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey  
 Pilgrim of heav'n's homeless way,  
 In what depth of night or day  
     Seekest thou repose now?

This song suits a beginner with a clear upper range who may not be comfortable with overt facial expressions. The song demands sincerity of bearing and will allow the student to begin accessing their expressive facial tools without stranding them in a comic or melodramatic song. As this is one of Ives's natural and philosophical songs, the singer does well to maintain a serene pose and gaze, with no gesture during the minute-long piece. The challenge for the beginner, here, is that of a simple poetic address. Since this rhetorical mode is almost certainly foreign, one must commit even more sincerely to the speaker's perspective. Given the amount of film or television theatricality that the general audience has consumed, this realist perspective will balance the older rhetorical style with the current expectations.

A genuine query, displayed as curiosity for the audience, will carry this song. Since the *piano* dynamic is indicated, as well as the *adagio sostenuto* tempo, any grand bellow on the first E-flat is a poor choice. The substance of this song is a sustained, hushed, double question to Nature. The breath of the singer must be that of a deeply curious, even awe-stricken, speaker asking an almost childish question. The singer best sings so as to become an unnoticed conduit between poem, music, and audience, delivering the pitches, words, and rhythms as if they were the composer himself.

Both pianist and singer must create the mood of the piece with only a brief introduction. To this end, it is better to breathe well before the entrance of the vocal line. This is because the proper length of the breath line is to sustain the melody until the words "fiery flight" (mm. 7-8). A short gasp of air just before entering will likely leave the new singer lacking. For the repeat as well, the phrasing insists that



the singer not breathe at m. 5. The singer can focus on meeting the first word of the second line with their breath, so that a motion toward the words “Speed” and, secondly, “Pilgrim,” gives a clear vector. When the breath holds itself a long phrase dies young.

Each of these stanzas gives the singer a very brief rhyme scheme and phrase pattern. Ives carries over the initial line end at m. 5, and prolongs the successive ends. The poem does not challenge the singer with obscure references, except for the word pinion, referring to the wings of light in this metaphor of the star, that close in a cavern, somewhere. If one clearly delivers the line, Shelley’s poetic license can be more accurately grasped by the listeners.

For the pianist, Ives gives no pedal markings, but one can assume the common practice of pedalling each measure. This follows the slurs in the melody except for mm. 12-13 which goes over the barline. A certain astral quality can easily be attained here by the pianist, and the sparkling but distant figuration in the right hand of the pianist provides the key. The left hand clearly recedes.

#### Style Sheet for “A Song—For Anything”

poem by Nahum Tate (1652-1715), Nicholas Brady (1659-1726), and Charles Edward Ives

(a) O have mercy Lord, on me,  
 Thou art ever kind,  
 O, let me oppress'd with guilt,  
 Thy mercy find.  
 The joy Thy favor gives,  
 Let me regain,  
 Thy free spirit's firm support  
 My fainting soul sustain.

(b) When the waves softly sigh,  
 When the sunbeams die;  
 When the night shadows fall,  
 Evening bells call,  
 Margarita! Margarita!  
 I think of thee!  
 While the silver moon is gleaming,  
 Of thee, I'm dreaming.

(c) Yale, Farewell! we must part,  
 But in mind and heart,  
 We shall ever hold thee near,  
 Be life gay or drear.  
 Alma Mater! Alma Mater!  
 We will think of thee!  
 May the strength thou gavest  
 Ever be shown in ways, fair to see.

Note:\*The song above is a common illustration and not the only one in this book of how inferior music is inclined to follow inferior words and “vice-versa.” The music was originally written to the sacred words printed last and the best of the three.” Some thirty years ago it was sung in a country church and even as a response after the prayer. The congregation not only tolerated it, but accepted it apparently with satisfaction.<sup>14</sup>

The challenge of this song is not range or dynamics or even sustained singing, but simple farce. For Ives, this song is an exercise in sarcasm. For the new singer it can be a remarkably entertaining challenge. For that to occur, the singer must make some musical choices that clearly convey the different styles to which Ives pointed with his sarcastic composition. The first verse is sacred, the second sentimental, and the third is a collegiate anthem. At first reading this song seems to offer little to the new singer, or teacher. But, to the comedically inclined, this is an excellent and unusual song to include in a set. It is also a challenge for the new singer to develop a different treatment for the same music (akin to the strophic challenges encountered

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<sup>14</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 3. Ives's footnote to this song.

in Schubert).

Ives originally published these verses in this order: (b), (c), (a), perhaps focusing on the sentimentality of (b) as good evidence for its trashiness (see his footnote quoted above). With the sacred basis for the first verse, the singer must maintain a demeanor fitting a sacred service. The second verse allows for a more exaggerated take than the first, with the sentimental, romanticized text. And the third verse allows for the singer to summon a fervor for the Alma Mater and communicate in a melodramatic way what is often referred to as collegiate “spirit.” There are many opportunities for comedic contrast among these three verses, once the audience understands that it is the exact same music. The pianist can assist in the mood changes with textural choices: first verse, chorale-like; second verse, *arioso*; and the third verse, *marcato machismo*.

For the first verse, the singer can maintain a legato feeling and a religious commitment. However, at mm. 11-12 the clearly laughable treatment of the word “favor” must be delivered with a sincere devotion rather than a knowing wink. As well, the singer can emphasize the crescendo at m. 14. However, if the singer sells the punchline before it happens, then the moment is lost. In performance, sincerity finds more humor than insincerity.

At the second verse’s introduction, the singer has the opportunity to sustain the religious mood up to m. 11 at the word “Margarita.” To maximize the comedic effect, the singer can consider adding several, exaggerated physico-facial gestures of “love.” Also, a clear signal of mood change is to find a purer, brighter vowel for the name, especially. The cartoonish nature of this speaker contrasts well with the

sacred atmosphere of the first speaker.

The third verse is more challenging than the first two because the style of an alma mater song is rather lost on current students. Except at commencement ceremonies or as background music during a football or basketball game, this type of song does not usually carry the same fervor it once did. The syllabic setting of these songs is echoed here in Ives's setting. The marcato tendencies of the performances of these songs can be emphasized in this situation, as the score marking says "con espressione, per verse" (note: or read "perverse.")<sup>15</sup>

Ives targets this song for mocking, Burkholder notes, with the song "On the Counter." The texts were apparently sincerely set, with each belonging to a different popular genre: church solo, love song, or college song.<sup>16</sup> But Ives printed all three texts in one song, making it "an art song *about* different types of popular song."<sup>17</sup> So the singer must know the ironic effect of this sentimental music, yet perform it appropriately.

### Style Sheet for "Autumn"

poem by Harmony Twichell Ives (1876-1969), with Charles Ives

Earth rests!  
Her work is done, her fields lie bare,  
And 'ere the night of winter comes  
To hush her song and close her tired eyes,  
She turns her face for the sun to smile upon,  
And radiantly, through Fall's bright glow, he smiles

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<sup>15</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 404.

<sup>16</sup> Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 281.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

And brings the Peace of God!

This brief and challenging song gives the young singer several chances to display several of the precise articulation tools that are required in classical singing: staccato within slurs (mm. 10-13), clear diction in slow tempi (mm. 2-21), long ascending scales with crescendi (mm. 13-17), sustenance of mood, and recovery of voice from extremes of range (mm. 17-18). Yet the song is not overly challenging, and the purpose of the poem to describe the speaker's connection to Nature may well resonate more profoundly than the average beginner's song of love and/or shepherdesses. Also, this song challenges the *passaggio* of the beginner with ascending phrases and weighty accompaniment. The singer must maintain the buoyancy and verticality of their instrument as they are tempted to add weight and tension.

The dolorous, mucky opening measures set the lyrical, muted mood that sustains itself through the crescendo at m. 13. The poem opens with an exclamation, and the singer must commit to this, albeit hushed and *piano*. The singer may have a steady, observant, and absorbed gaze through mm. 3-5, as the piano communicates its pertinent music. Very importantly, there must be as little crescendo as possible at the phrase (mm. 8-9) "and ere the night of winter comes," because the mood continues to sustain a serene and tired motion. A vocal crescendo at this point would break the soft spell of the piano and poem. The final sound of the word "comes" at m. 9 can be connected to the next phrase, though a breath should be taken. Again, the mood is the priority, above, almost, the purity of tone.

The singer must pay special attention to the staccato marked words at mm. 10-13. This will contrast with the ascending crescendo of the climax of the song at mm. 14-17. There are three crescendos marked from m. 13 to m. 16. Rather than bearing down and gripping the voice, it is important for the new singer to allow the piano triplets and crescendo to add the weight to the climax here, as the technical basis for ascending crescendo is often undeveloped yet.

As well, the new singer must find a brightened facial expression at those moments that has very little horizontal feel to it. This is a challenge as the diphthongs [e:i] and [a:i] encourage a wide sensation.<sup>18</sup> However, as one ascends through the passaggio, one must not spread the vocal tract with these widened vowels. Going on, this is essential to find a suitably clear and present resumption of the melody at m. 18 without damage to the instrument. A light verticality in the head and neck allows the singer to maintain the instrument's poise then.

A common mistake for beginners is to linger on the "r" of the word "radiantly" at m. 14. This consonant must be clearly and quickly delivered, and the singer must allow the unrestrained vowel to carry the import. The singer then must provide enough energy and impetus to "effect" the change in the piano from quarter note (syncopated) to triplet eighth note. This echoes what Ostwald says about the musical material.<sup>19</sup> At the beginning of m. 16, the singer will focus on an inhalation of a smiling, welcome joy pulled from the phrase "he smiles." This will allow several

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<sup>18</sup> Shown here in brackets in the standard of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA),

<sup>19</sup> Ostwald, *Acting for Singers*, 4. "Your music is your character's feelings (and vice-versa)."

beneficial resonance adjustments to naturally occur. This smile can then be smiled through at the beginning of m.18 for the emotional inhalation of serene spiritual completion for the final phrase “[a]nd brings the Peace of God.” One infernal habit of many American singers should be avoided here: the final, plural s must be voiced [z] on the word “smiles,” m. 17.

Though there are no indications of piano pedal markings, Ives does indicate *sempre legato* at m. 2 for the right hand. This would indicate that no pedal would be used, and the slurs so marked would provide the intended phrasing. If so, this would give this song a drier texture, much more amenable to textual clarity.

Concerning the tempo: *Adagio* runs the gamut of beats-per-minute from 67 to 76. The pianist must find this stately, natural pulse, aided as it is by the offbeat left hand, and the singer, upon entering at the words “Earth rests!” and “Her work is done” must neither disturb the pianist’s line, nor slow it down. The slow sequence in the piano’s right hand through m. 12 can best be presented in the foreground, as the voice has only a piano dynamic whereas the piano has several dynamic markings. So, the voice must clearly present the text without overshadowing the piano. The singer can best achieve this by avoiding overwork of the articulators (lips and tongue-tip), and, by allowing them to have a soft precision, the energetic breath can deliver lucid words instead of the muscle tension.

Other notes: the small decrescendo at m. 17 on the word “smiles” resembles an accent mark, but it is not. The responsibility for the ritardando at m. 19 is the pianist’s mostly. The singer must simply hear and sense the tempo change in rehearsal so that the performance is consonant.

Style Sheet for "An Old Flame"

poem by Charles Edward Ives

When dreams enfold me,  
 Then I behold thee,  
 See thee, the same loving sweetheart of old.  
 Through seasons gliding,  
 Thou art abiding  
 In the depths of my heart untold;  
 For I do love thee,  
 May God above  
 His guarding care, unfold.

Ah! could I meet thee,  
 And have thee greet me,  
 Come to me, stand by me, love me as yore,  
 Sadness outdone then,  
 New life would come then:  
 Such joy never known before;  
 For I do love thee,  
 May God above thee,  
 Bless thee ever more, God bless thee, love!

This is a sweetly sincere love song with overt sacred tones. It fits a beginner who is has a good range, but who may be uncomfortable expressing more demonstrative emotions of desire or lust. The treatment Ives gives the text indicates the lightness with which the singer and pianist should perform it. Whereas Ives regularly notes where a *poco ritardando* should be observed, at mm. 4 & 18 he does not indicate a *ritardando*. This detail, plus the slightly syncopated rhythm in the left hand just before the barline at mm. 5 & 18, where the singer begins, are emblematic of Ives's particularly incisive brand of nostalgia, his eclectic and precise ideas of substance over manner. A heavier hand on these tempo indications would sink the song in a syrup of melodrama—the momentum must be lightly carried.



Concerning the poem, the dream setting which the first line indicates seems to reject the current state of the relationship in favor of the ideal. This is corroborated at the words "Come to me, stand by me, love, as of yore," where the yearning for the old situation is explicit. The romantic symbol of lost, or unattainable, love seems echoed here. The speaker exults in the sadness that will be "undone" if only the sweetheart would join him or her in the present. So, the overall emotion is longing; this emotion must be conveyed through each phrase, reaching a peak at m. 28—each breath a pleading breath.

The commas in the original poem offer a clear guide to the question of breath marks, especially the lack of comma at mm. 7-8, 10-11, 14-15, and 28-29. The young singer need not be disturbed by the capitalized letter (indicating the beginning of a new line of poetry), which may seem to be at a mid-sentence point in this reading of the music. When appropriate, the scansion of the original poem invites enjambment in reading, rather than a lift or pause at the end of each line.

Concerning the tempo, the marking *con moto* conveys a forward direction that does not contradict the sentimentality in the poem, but rather enhances the yearning of it. The tendency among many new singers is to slow down the tempo upon entering, which contradicts the original tempo marking. One might advise the new singer to stretch the tempo faster, during rehearsal, to feel the boundary of what is too fast. By erring on this side, the singer might stay clear of dragging the tempo toward the slower limit of *con moto*.

To summarize: careful attention to the ink on the page, as always, being sure to maintain steady tempo if no *ritardando* is indicated; with a steady gaze and

relaxed, tender demeanor the singer begins the song, only beaming at the *crescendo* and *forte* phrases from mm. 21-26; and the tempo marking *con moto* coincides with the mood of the piece, encouraging more eagerness into the gesture rather than a slower, more maudlin pace.

### Style Sheet for "Songs My Mother Taught Me"

poem by Adolf Heyduk (1835-1923), in uncredited English translation<sup>20</sup>

Songs my mother taught me in the days long vanished,  
Seldom from her eyelids were the tear drops banished.  
Now I teach my children each melodious measure;  
Often tears are flowing from my memory's treasure.

The technical challenges of this song are the low tessitura, long phrases, and sustained dramatic mood. Because of its simplified vocal range and generally straightforward melody, it appeals more immediately to younger singers and is more regularly performed than other of his songs. This song is an example of Ives's masterful ability to create a simple texture and melody underpinned by a dense harmony.

If a singer strictly follows the dynamics indicated, and commits to the precise and sincere delivery of the poem, then the simplicity of the melody disappears into the intensity of the nostalgia Ives created here. With a few gestural ideas, Ives fits a simple melody and poem into a yearning timelessness that remembers an earlier

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<sup>20</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 410. "The original author was the Czech poet Adolf Heyduk (1835-1923). Ives's source was probably the translation by Natalie Macfarren (1826-1916), text authority for this edition, in Antonín Dvořák, *Cigánské melodie Gypsy Melodies*, op. 55, no. 4 (Berlin: Simrock, 1880). Ives abbreviated her last line ('oft the tears are flowing, oft they flow from my mem'ry's treasure') as 'Often tears are flowing from my memory's treasure' but made no other significant changes."

time with the speaker's mother. But this mother is drawn as a holder of emotional expression via songs, and nothing more. In his work on these songs within Ives's cultural framework, Kevin Kelly sketches the effects of nostalgia on members of the family, writing, "those works concerned with aging did so for nostalgic ends, referring less to people per se than a sense of a better past."<sup>21</sup>

The simplicity of the piano at m. 26, followed by the fermata on a rest before the resumption of the music at m. 27, contributes mightily to the final re-statement, pianississimo, of the A section. The singer must take great care not to disturb the final two pages of this song with involuntary crescendo or accent. The mood of serene melancholy must be maintained outwardly, while, inwardly, the singer sustains the necessary breath energy to spin their tone towards the last sound of m. 39. This is another challenge to the sustained soft singing technique that novice and intermediate singers must learn.

The student can be encouraged to find breaths that are of an energetic tenderness. The breath must be that of a loud stage whisper, not of a soft whisper. Several coaches and authors have noticed that as singers, we can do well with general washes of emotion. In this song, the emotional pull almost subdues the singer into pensive quietness, and so it must be noticed to be avoided. In rehearsals, a singer may stretch these moods by singing once through the song with a generic anger, then incredulity, then sadness, just so the emotional expressors can be more easily noticed. This often liberates the new singer into an extroverted expressive

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<sup>21</sup> Kelly, "Cultural Contexts," 391.

arena where their expressive capacity fills a hall rather than comfortably fitting a small practice studio.

Of special interest in this song are the plural s constructions in English. One must take great care to voice these as in [z], and not [s], which gives the impression of a foreign accent in English. Examples include: "tears," "days," "mem'ry's," "songs," and "eyelids," but not "teardrops."

At m. 21, the words "often tears are flowing" refer to not current weeping, but weeping, as it were, from the cherished memory toward the speaker. The singer must not weep in this case, as this will inhibit the free function of the larynx, but they must project the intense connection to the mother.

Beginning with m. 20 and lasting to m. 24, Ives indicates a triple decrescendo finally ending with a pianississimo. This indicates many things for the singer: the intense thoughtfulness of the speaker as they recall this moment, the intensely emotional peak in the speaker which may possibly spill over into tears actually flowing, the direction of the music toward the rest fermata of m. 26, and the intensity with which Ives wanted the moment to be imbued.

As the singing actor intends to successfully portray Ives's intentions, such moments of potentially treacly sentimentality deserve study. The aforementioned m. 26 and the fermata in the piano at m. 36 should both be firmly aligned with sincerity of expression. This implies simplicity of bearing and delicacy of touch. This does not imply melodramatic facial expression or gesture. The understated carries more power here so that the audience will scrutinize even more closely the spare gestures of communication; less is more.

Since the new singer has very little vocabulary for effective recital deportment, the small, important details are often overlooked. Often the attention to these few things will enliven and improve the performance. In this light, the new singer may be directed to many excellent recorded performances, as well as the goal of the simplest, most lucid expression in hand, arm, neck, and face. Without stiffness or self-consciousness in performance, the effective artist has rehearsed many hours before a mirror or with the aid of video feedback from prior performances.

A new singer can seek to maintain the intensity of focus and commitment to still, poised moments like those described above. Both willingness of the student and encouragement towards them from the teacher or coach are necessary. Moreover, the courage required for such seemingly risky commitments can be clearly outlined during the rehearsal process. Though self-conscious at first, the student should find more ease with each repetition.

### Style sheet for "Du alte Mutter"

poem by Aasmund Olafsson Vinje (1818-1870) in Norwegian, German translation Edmund Lobedanz, English translation of Lobedanz's German by Frederick Corder.

Du alte Mutter, bist so arm,  
Und schaffst im Schweiss wie Blut,  
Doch immer noch ist's Herz dir warm  
Und du gabst mir den starken Arm  
Und diesen wilden Mut.

Du wischtest ab die Träne mein,

War's mir im Herzen bang,  
Und küßtest mich den Knaben dein,  
Und hauchtest in die Brust hinein  
Den siegesfrohen Sang.

Du gabst mir, was beseligt mich,  
Das weiche Herz das Herz dazu;

Drum Alte will ich lieben dich,  
 Wohin mein Fuß auch richtet sich,  
 Wohl sonder Rast und Ruh.  
 Mutter, Mutter, Mutter.

My dear old mother, poor thou art,  
 And toilest day and toilest night,  
 But ever warm remains thy heart,  
 'Twas thou my courage didst impart,  
 My arm of sturdy might.

Thou'st wip'd away each childish tear,

When I was sore distrest,  
 And kiss'd thy little laddie dear,  
 And taught him songs that banish fear  
 From ev'ry manly breast.

And more than all thou'st given me  
 A humble, true and tender heart;  
 So, dear old mother, I'll love thee  
 Where e'er my foot may wander free,  
 Till death our lives shall part.  
 Mother, Mother, Mother.

A teacher may find appeal in this song in the unusual subject matter, varied

sections, and final note of melancholy. The tessitura is not challenging, and the range is just more than an octave. The language is a barrier, but many first or second year students sing in French or German. The variations in mood will also gently challenge the beginner.

This song continues a trait found in many of Ives's early songs, as the piano states an opening motive, or ostinato, exactly twice before the voice enters. Directly in the first line Ives rushes past the rhythm of the poem's constructed line endings and alters the expectation (set up by those first two statements in the piano) of the musical structure. This gives a curious character to the first few moments of this song.

The speaker paints a sentimental picture of this mother: old, poor, sweaty, loving, supportive, and courageous. One can draw a line of perspective to the adolescent tones of the speakers in the songs "The Greatest Man," "Slow March," "The Side Show," and "Slugging a Vampire." The niceness, the "edification" of society and by extension the recital hall audience, is pushed away as Ives seeks a more profound expression, less concerned with the breve gaudium than with a bang-on

piece. Once the beginner understands the context of Ives's perspective, the songs should unfold more easily before them.

After the repeat, verbatim, of the first section, Ives repeats the soothing word "Mutter," a repetition that was not in the original poem by Vinje.<sup>1</sup> The effect of ending the song *sotto voce* after much loud singing is that of tenderness, and fright even. One senses that the singer is brash and falsely confident. And since the singer just spoke of his mother dying in m. 40, it seems clear that the death of the mother has not fully been reflected upon. At mm. 11-12, 24-25, and 38-39 the effect resembles a boasting young boy, or even more simply a nostalgic look back at the strength the speaker used to have.

Beginning with m. 15, the B section begins with staccato gestures as the poem describes the domestic relationship between son and mother. Details such as the wiping of tears and teaching of songs gives the listener the sense of pride and sentimentality in the scene. Moreover, the piano goes on to comment upon the domesticity with a repetitive and even hesitant set of simple chords. Ives maintains the simplicity of the vignette while expressing a full sense of the humanity in it.

The dynamics of this song range widely, and should give the new singer a clear path to Ivesian expression. The crescendo from *piano* at mm. 10-11 to *forte* underlines the strength of the words "du gabst mir den starken Arm, und diesen wilden Muth." With the fermata of m. 15 the texture changes to an intimate and staccato scene, with a descending chromatic simplicity. Interestingly, the piano

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<sup>1</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 425.

plays a different accent pattern beneath the phrase beginning m. 9. This syncopated accenting is echoed later in mm. 40-41.

The pianist sets the mood, as in most of these songs, and can imitate the simple domesticity with a whining feel in the first four measures. One would even recommend a strict *pianissimo*, without expression but a simple *con moto*, as the tempo indicates. This hushed, tentative mood then hands off to the singer who appears to be murmuring as they remember the mother. Kelly notes that Ives's true reaction to the text can be found in the final cadence,

the thrice repeated sotto voce "mother." The modal and syncopated cadence of the piano attenuates the resolved or assured feeling the poem gives. Ives does not include the surety of heavenly reunion, nor a continuation of the mother-child relationship, but instead spotlights the finality of the severance of bond between mother and child. Surely Ives set this drifting cadence with this in mind.<sup>2</sup>

### Style sheet for "A Night Song"

poem by Thomas Moore (1779–1852)

The young May moon is beaming, love,  
 The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming, love;  
     How sweet to rove  
     Through Morna's grove,  
 When the drowsy world is dreaming, love!  
 Then awake!—the heavens look bright, my dear,  
 'Tis never too late for delight, my dear;  
     And the best of all ways  
     To lengthen our days  
 Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear!

This song challenges the ability of the singer to renew their breath fully and quickly. The tessitura is a bit high, but overall not extended. The rapid pace of words will challenge their diction capability. Perhaps the most vital detail for the effective

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<sup>2</sup> Kelly, "Cultural Contexts," 398.



expression of this song is to observe the soft dynamics Ives wrote. By insisting on the secretive mood from the beginning of the song and ending with the same quietness, the naughtier sense of the song can be brought to the foreground. This song makes an excellent change of pace as part of any recital set about love or night.

The repetition of the musical motive from mm. 31-35 illuminates the idea in the poem that the speaker lengthens days by stealing more hours from the night. And Ives achieves this legerdemain by pulling the vocal line past the expected cadential point at m. 35 to begin a new phrase at m. 36. It is an aural enjambment that the piano ignores while the singer insists upon it. The listener, naturally, wonders when the two will re-synchronize. The singer must be able to convincingly pull this off in one breath, and gently upset the listener's sense of a perfectly rounded phrase and period. Ives's musical, comedic moment enhances the soft loving, cooing, flirting tone of the poem.

At m. 21 the repetition of the word "dreaming" begins, and the singer should intensify these by either elongating the vowel [i] of dream or changing the expressivity of the consonant cluster [dʒ] and by decrescendoing on the second iteration of the word "dreaming."

Ives chose to repeat the word "gleaming" at m. 11-12, and repeat three times the word "dreaming" at mm. 20-23, and again to conclude the song at m. 51-54. This must involve a clear change of facial expression from the singer, indicating with the musical decrescendo—a conspiratorial decrescendo. One can carry this far into the clownish, but a sincere, beckoning, hopeful smile should convey the conspiracy to "steal a few hours from the night."

For the pianist, the tempo should allow for a vivacious left hand, though subdued to *pianissimo*. A sustained *pianissimo* for both pianist and singer adds excitement to mood and excellent contrast to the *mezzo forte* at m. 24 “Then awake!” This energetic *pianissimo* decrescendos at m. 12, but a breath must be taken here between the eighth notes, and the pianist, naturally, will wait. A *sempre staccato* marked below the left hand of the piano has no other marking against it throughout the song. One can assume that the half notes in the left hand beginning at m. 19 are to be played non-staccato, then returning to staccato for the return at m. 36 of the A section.

#### Style Sheet for “There Is a Lane”

poem by Charles Edward Ives (unattributed)

There is a lane which winds towards the bay  
 Passing a wood where the little children play;  
 There, summer evenings of days long past,  
 Learned I a love song, and my heart still holds it fast!

This is an excellent song for the beginning high voice, especially male, for the challenge to the sustained breath of a young singer. Also the peak of the final phrase with *rallentando* gives young singer a chance to release the higher range, while sustaining the mood. Because it is so brief, the song also challenges the singer to immediately create a mood with their presence.

As Ives said, “must it always be a polite triad, a ‘breve gaudium,’ a ribbon to match the voice? Should it not be free at times from the dominion of the thorax, the

diaphragm, the ear, and other points of interest?”<sup>3</sup> It is tempting to bellow this song, to sink it like the operatic greyhound Ives refers to so pejoratively. However, if one imagines a scene where “little children play,” one can quickly find a simpler style to evoke this observation.

At m.7, the singer will be challenged with the slightly surprising intervals outlining a d minor major seventh triad. (These are also different from m. 15 where the arpeggio is a simpler triad, though it does begin on the third tone.) Even with the crescendo from mm. 15-16, the dominant thought must be expression of melancholy memory rather than a display of gorgeous tone. Ives indicates this mood by ending the final, downcast words “still holds it fast” with a diminuendo and decrescendo from *pianissimo* to *pianississimo*. With this in mind, the beginning and middle of this brief song must be kept *sostenuto* and introverted to truly match the mood of the poem.

The score marking *adagio sostenuto* and the simple, repetitive motion of the first two measures of the piano requires the singer to maintain the mood by entering with a smooth manner and a sustained legato. It is often the second half of each note that novice singers overlook as they attempt to sing legato. The well-known twentieth-century vocal pedagogue Richard Miller advises a simple solution: “Allow the second half to remain at the same dynamic as the first.”<sup>4</sup>

At m. 9, the *poco rit.* gives the singer an opportunity to express the nostalgia with a small, wistful facial gesture. This contrasts nicely with the amorous

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<sup>3</sup> Ives, *postface*, plate 2.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, *Solutions for Singers*, 45.

melancholy the singer must express facially at the song's end, where the singer "holds it fast" despite the "days long past."

Breath marks can clearly be sensed at the end of each 4 measure group, except the last one with the words "Learned I a love song." At this phrase the *rallentando* at m. 16 gives the singer a chance to broaden the note, and then breathe so as to sustain the phrase through the words "heart still holds it fast!"

### Style sheet for "Slow March"

poem by Lyman Brewster (Ives's uncle) and other Ives family members<sup>5</sup>

One evening just at sunset we laid him in the grave;  
Although a humble animal, his heart was true and brave.  
All the family joined us in solemn march and slow,  
From the garden place beneath the trees and where the sunflowers grow.

The introduction of this song quotes Handel's well-known Dead March from *Saul*, which was commonly used as in funerals from the Civil War on. The pianist and singer must be mindful of this as they convey the proper respect. This song challenges the abilities of the novice singer to sustain the voice through long phrases with somber, unaffected diction. The range will not be challenged, so this may suit the least experienced of singers. Simplicity of face and gesture are required by the brief prelude and postlude. The singer can rely on steady, distant eye focus in such still moments.

The *piano* marking for the initial voice entrance gives novice singer the challenge of singing quietly and with energy. Note the crescendo marked through

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<sup>5</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 403.

words “heart was true and brave,” requiring the singer to crescendo up to the last possible moment then breathing before the words “All the family.”

The eight measure introduction requires the singer to maintain a mood of sustained innocence and melancholy. In general, when the speaker in a song is a child one finds that the goal must always be simplicity of style and clarity of diction, with a tone as non-operatic as possible, and with very little vibrato. Also, the somewhat colloquial syntax gives novice singer challenge to deliver clear words in first phrase.

Concerning the piano, the left hand, at m. 20, can be played *senza rit.* to maintain a more innocent, unaffected mood before the final phrase. A challenging final decrescendo at m. 23 to *pianissimo* must be observed as Ives notates a sustained tone through two whole notes. Observing this grants the song a solemn end and quasi-nod as the final resting place of the family pet is noted.

### Style sheet for “Berceuse”

poem by Charles Edward Ives (unattributed)

O'er the mountains towards the west,  
As the children go to rest,  
Faintly comes a sound,  
A song of nature hovers round.  
Tis the beauty of the night;  
Sleep thee well till morning light.

This song is a good example of the challenges facing many beginning singers. The slow tempo, soft dynamic and high initial pitch seize up the throats of most young males, especially. The teacher may instruct the student to imagine singing the note a third above the intended note, so they can draw some of the higher pitch's

energy downward. An English text replaces the original German of Ives's lullaby song, which was modelled on Brahms's Lullaby. Ives gave the song a more poised feel than the repetitive gestures of Brahms's lullaby and this makes the song sound more art song than folk song.

This song provides a good chance for a lesson in energized breath for soft, sustained singing and clear, though subdued diction. Each phrase is between six and eight seconds, except for the final phrase of approximately twelve seconds. The phrases do not give the singer more than a brief moment to breathe, however, and this is the main challenge to the novice singer. Although the *appoggio* technique takes several years to fully master, the quick breaths between long phrases in this song will encourage reliance on this technique. Since a new singer very rarely understands the amounts of breath energy required to truly create a clear word-image more than twenty feet away, much less at a soft dynamic, this song will give a novice the simpler challenge of not disturbing the mood with an errant consonant.

One meets the legato demands of a pensive and subdued song like this by rehearsing the song on only its vowels while still singing the correct pitches and rhythms. This improves the value of each note, as it is only the vowels that carry the beauty of a voice, and allows the singer to track the vowels through each phrase more precisely. Mary Ann Hart, in her studio work, has advised this technique for improvement of the sustained legato sections of songs.

Additionally, the consonants are forced into a shorter time-frame, which is the hallmark of clear word-image delivery, or good diction. This is an important point to highlight for the young singer who is often used to prolonging the

consonants of a word (especially the final consonants) in order to produce a more “sincere” reading. In the classical idiom, John Moriarty points out in his classic text on diction, it is imperative that consonants be fed energy that flows with the energy of the vowels and does not interrupt it.<sup>6</sup>

The tongue must be free to articulate the vowels and consonants. Richard Miller describes the right starting position for all consonants and vowels:

The apex of the tongue belongs in contact with the inner surface of the lower front teeth, where it lodges when one says “Um-hm!” This is the case for all vowels and for the majority of both voiced and unvoiced consonants in Western languages. . . . Tongue rigidity causes transition sounds that negate good vowel definition.<sup>7</sup>

### Style sheet for “Feldeinsamkeit”

poem by Hermann Allmers (1821-1902)

Ich ruhe still im hohen grünen Gras  
Und sende lange meinen Blick nach oben,  
Von Grillen rings umschwirrt ohn Unterlaß,

Von Himmelsbläue wundersam umwoben.

Und<sup>8</sup> schönen weiße Wolken ziehn dahin  
Durchs tiefe Blau, wie schöne stille Träume;

Mir ist, als ob ich längst gestorben bin  
Und ziehe selig mit durch ew'ge Räume.

translation by Jacob Sentgeorge

I rest calmly in tall green grass  
And send my gaze upward for a long time,  
The crickets surround me with an unrelenting buzz

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<sup>6</sup> John Moriarty, *Diction* (Boston: E.C. Schirmer Music, 1975), xii.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, *Solutions*, 230.

<sup>8</sup> Brahms and Ives change to: “Die schönen weißen”

In the blue of heaven wonderfully enclosed.

And lovely white clouds flow by  
Through deep blue, like beautiful serene dreams;  
To me, it's like I've been dead a long time  
And I float tranquilly through timeless space.

A more challenging song than the other selections in this guide, this song offers challenges of range, phrase length, quick breath renewal, rapid dynamic contrast, and tessitura. The singer must also convey the powerful connection to nature as they capably manage the technical challenges. Also, this is one of the longer songs in this guide, and so the singer must sustain the mood much longer than the other songs.

This early song of Ives provides the recitalist an excellent bridge from the Romantic styles of Schumann and Brahms to Ives and the various early twentieth century composers. Since most lieder concerned itself with melancholy, love denied (or impossibly distant), and release in death, this song offers the novice a different Romantic topic: connection to the Infinite via Nature.

The middle section of the song may provide too many challenges for the new singer, but challenges are not always overwhelming, and the self-discovery in challenge often invigorates a new student.

One of the many interpretive challenges of this piece is the ability to sing sustained and *pianissimo* from mm. 6-13 before the crescendo of m. 14. At mm. 31-32 he repeats the words “schöne stille Träume” with a slightly altered descending interval. Since repetition often intensifies the expression of the speaker in a dramatic read, this provides the singer with an excellent opportunity to use the



initial consonants of the two adjectives “schöne” and “stille” to emphasize the decision by Ives to repeat the phrase. The old saw pertains here, “beauty in the vowels, drama in the consonants.”

In mm. 25 and 27 the singer must take care to emphasize the initial syllables of each word in a hushed manner. If a strict legato is maintained here the monotone of the melody gives a murmuring feel to what is written as a dream-like image of white clouds. Ives preferred the text clarity to tone for tone’s sake. Also note there are several enharmonic spellings for the young singer to catch: mm. 15-16 and 27-28.

Ostwald finds that engaging a phrase with an emotional breath effectively energizes the voice.<sup>9</sup> This technique is especially useful at mm. 32 and 40, where the dynamic must suddenly become *pianissimo*. The expression here (m. 32) is to match the words “mir ist, als ob ich längst gestorben bin,” and since Ives repeated it, the singer must express the wonderment of the death-feeling. For m. 40 the singer must breathe to express the still sustained original moment of lying in the grass looking up at the clouds in wonderment. Since these words have already been sung, the mood is much more important than the text. For this instance, practicing the poem as a monologue will guide the singer into the more expressive, emotional mode. Before the mirror, the clear facial expression will be found as well.

Ives repeats several phrases and quatrains from the poem by Hermann Allmers (1821-1902), Bremen, published 1860. This was not unusual in the household song genre, but the intensity of musical expression with which Ives

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<sup>9</sup> Ostwald, *Acting for Singers*, 23.

presents it is not sentimental but quasi-expressionist. In other words, the intensity of repetition and the chromaticism that Ives composes, without treacly melodic material, gives the repeated text a priority. It evokes the powerful Transcendental connection, the visceral link, to Nature. The singer must not exaggerate this repetition, but must only convey the words, as Ives prefers, “at the right time on the right pitches.”

Concerning the piano, in m.1 : *Allegretto molto tranquillo* with *pedale* marked *sempre*. Taken with the slur markings, the pianist should pedal every two beats, each measure, until m. 24 where the slur is carried through the entire measure. M. 40 also has a different slur written for the second half of the measure. m. 48 in piano marks the only *ppp* in this song.

### Style Sheet for “To Edith”

poem by Harmony Twichell Ives (1876-1969)

So like a flower, thy little four-year face in its pure freshness,  
That to my bedside comes each morn in happy guise –  
I must be smiling too.  
O little flower-like face, that comes to me each morn for kisses,  
Bend thou near me while I inhale its fragrance sweet –  
And put a blessing there.

This song provides the singer with a good lesson in expressing simplicity and energetic happiness while maintaining a gentle mood. The steady technical skills that create this effect are the task of the teacher. This song is especially suited to the exercises found below. The singer must sing with a softened legato and the demonstrate the ability to easily maneuver many chromatic, stepwise phrases.

This poem's simplicity must be communicated by the performers with energetic wonder, not slack admiration. The *andante moderato* tempo combines with the simple musical material and domestic sleepiness to invite the singer to croon or coo. This is a mistake in that the vocal mechanism is robbed of its intensity and beauty at the lowered energy level. Though very intimate, and directed to a child, the singer must gather as much energy as possible to sustain the medium-long phrases with prolonged vowels. Again, this foreign sensation will introduce the young singer to the unusual combination in classical singing of legato melody, clear diction, and intense expression. Even at this beginning stage the awareness of this ideal must be encouraged. The singer can even be encouraged to discover the limit of too much energy in the vocal expression of this song.

The melody was composed in 1892, and the text and revised accompaniment in 1919. According to John Kirkpatrick, "Mrs. Ives [in] 1919 indicated that the 2nd stanza was meant as a revision of the first, but Ives included both."<sup>10</sup> This interesting choice will allow the singer to be more specific with the second stanza as the gentle imperative from the speaker "bend thou near me" is indicated facially, or gesturally, but not with a bending at the waist by the singer. The title refers to Edith, the Iveses' daughter (1914-1956), adopted by Charles and Harmony in 1916.<sup>11</sup> So, one sees the progression of an older song melody from Ives to a song suiting the newly domesticated situation of an adopted daughter.

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<sup>10</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 450-451.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

The emotional breathing described above can be utilized in this intensely simple, joyful song. For example, the singer will focus on inhaling the wonder and near disbelief of the resemblance of the beautiful young girl's face to a flower. This breath will suffice for the entire first stanza. The second stanza will have the singer inhale the thankful joyousness (and desire to bless) that this young face wants kisses and smells so sweet.

Gentle legato phrasing will challenge the young singer to overcome the consonant clusters in words such as “freshness,” “each morn,” and “must be.” The *ritardando* at m. 7 and mm. 15-16 must be navigated with a steady breath flow, free of tension through each consonant. It is best to rehearse these phrases on one good vowel (according to each singer) and then on the vowels within each word in that phrase. For example: m. 7 will be sung on [a] until it feels comfortable and the *rit.* is met. Then the singer will sing the vowels from the words “I must be smiling too,” which translates in IPA as [a:i:ʌ:i:a:i:i:u].

Another important point for the young singer is to preserve the mental link in the first stanza between the end of the phrase “face in its pure freshness” and “that to my bedside.” The quarter note tied to half note and eighth note clearly indicates Ives's idea that the phrase be as closely connected as possible. The second stanza does not require this, though the music remains the same.

A small, and intricate, challenge for the pianist is the many indications in treble clef for LH and RH, most especially at m. 15. Also noteworthy is the staccato marking on the initial chord at m. 17. This gesture gives a fresher, happier feel to the cadence than it would have without.

Style Sheet for “Spring Song” (1904)

poem by Harmony Twichell Ives (1876-1969)

Across the hill of late, came spring  
And stopped and looked into this wood, and called.  
Now all the dry brown things are answ’ring,  
With here a leaf and there a fair blown flow’r,  
I only heard her not, and wait.

Although Ives notes in his *Memos* that this song was written during “periods of being good and nice . . . weak-minded, retrogressive moments,” the song was intended to appeal to his future wife, as it was a setting of her poem.<sup>12</sup> In that light, this song is a sincere gesture, and sweetly made. The singer and pianist can approach it the same way, and the teacher can note that the technical challenge here is both range and expression. This song is a good example of the suitability of Ives’s songs for the younger singer; there is much musical detail yet to be learned, but the clarity of expression is the goal, and the stamina challenge of longer songs is absent.

A slightly larger range is required for this song than for most of the others in this guide, and it suits a slightly higher voice. The phrase lengths are not especially long as the melody forms small arabesques, and the tempo helps maintain the motion forward, including the *agitato* at m. 13. The performers can seek a lighter feel for the first half of the song, as the text describes spring (mm. 1-10), and a remorseful tinge for the second half (mm. 12-21).

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<sup>12</sup> Ives, *Memos*, 126.

The *allegretto* tempo marking, the staccato piano textures throughout, and the spry dotted rhythms gives this a nice contrast from many of the slower songs in this guide. For those reasons, and for poetic material, this brief song pairs well with some of the other nature and season-themed songs, such as “Autumn,” “Two Little Flowers,” “Feldeinsamkeit,” and even “Night Song” with the mention of the “May moon.”

An effect similar to that found near the end of “Autumn” occurs at m. 18 of “Spring Song,” where the peak of the song is followed by a subdued phrase. This dramatic device challenges the young singer to maintain energy through the crescendo, and be free enough to breathe well for the next quiet phrase. Above all, this pause between phrases invites the young artist to plunge into the emotional sense of that moment. Such momentousness powers the best moments in art song, in the author’s experience.

The poetry offers an interesting challenge in that it subtly shifts temporal tense, from past tense in the first two lines to present tense in the final three lines. As mentioned above, the musical texture provides clear expressive direction, and the score marking *agitato* at m. 13 gives the singer a clear way through. The shift in temporal tense, though, requires the singer to prepare it with a change of mood during the brief interlude at mm. 10-12. Also the dynamic in the piano of *piano* can be adopted, rather than keep the *mezzoforte* and *forte* of the previous phrases. (One can even hear Spring calling repeatedly in the dotted rhythm of the piano interlude.) A suggested way to intensify the mood at mm. 15-16 is to utilize the initial consonants in the phrase “there a fair blown flow’r” for clarity of diction and

expression. That mouthful of words then allows the agitated singer to breathe easily and fully (with exasperation even) at the beginning of m. 17 just before “I only heard her not.”

The repeated phrase at the end of the song will test the young singer’s ability to maintain technical fundamentals while expressing the full weight of the song. Moments like these are not overly common in the songs of beginner anthologies. Hitchcock found discrepancies between two versions, showing that one had the final chord (m. 21) crossed out.<sup>13</sup> Both choices are peculiar and delightful.

#### Style Sheet for “Romanzo (di Central Park)”

Leigh Hunt (fl. 1820s), stanzas 1-3; [Charles Ives, stanza 4]

[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
Grove,	Heart,	Kiss,	Heart,
Rove,	Impart,	Bliss,	Impart,
Night,	Prove,	Blest,	Impart,
Delight.	Love.	Rest.	Love.

This song is useful for the comedically gifted singer who may not have the largest range. Concise and simple, it might be the most sarcastic song Ives created. Dating from 1900 (or ca. 1911) this song arrives near the end of the parlour song publishing boom of the Victorian era. Ives comments again on this ubiquitous music

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<sup>13</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 430. “m. 21: In R, Ives crossed out this measure (a possibility for performers, though P’s ending on the subdominant is unusual as it is).” R is Ives’s copy, P is *114 Songs*.

in the song “On the Counter” (1920) which points out the “nice and neat” phrases from the parlour song tradition. Hitchcock notes that in a previous sketch of the song Ives jotted the heading, “Andante dulce [sic] con grazia, con espressione [sic], con amour, con plat de jour.” He also notes that although the phrase-slurs are “somewhat incoherent . . . it is best to retain them as they may be intentional in this parody.”<sup>14</sup>

Such a brief song requires of the singer to immediately engage the text and melody with high energy and focus. So, the piano dynamic must be intense and quasi-conspiratorial to be evocative. It is not the quiet of the song “Afterglow”, but the quiet of the alert and stealthy lovers meeting late at night. The entire song lies within the intensely energized mutterings of the speaker.

As this song is a parody, several specifics are best observed. It is important to roll the “r” of the beginnings of “Grove,” “Rove,” “Prove,” “Rest” and emphasize the initial consonants of “Night” and “Delight,” and especially “Love” and “Bliss.” The expressive possibilities in these consonants can be experimented with to sustain the moments. And the satire increases with the variation in color and expression of consonants and vowels.

The entrances of the voice just after the beat in mm. 2-5 give the effect of breathless communication, even panting. This initial, off-kilter sense leads into the irregular rhythms of mm. 5-10. The singer can take advantage of this by slightly emphasizing the rhythmic changes, also giving the audience a cue that the entrances were not simply “missed.” The use of melodramatic breathing, audible and even “emotional”,

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<sup>14</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 424.



can be used to good effect in this song, most especially at mm.13-22. (These frequent breaths can be comedic in that the singer is “untrained” and “overcome with emotion”, though that is a smaller comedic target.)

Ives ritards the gesture even further by the *rit. poco a poco e dim.* at m. 10. When combined with the repetition of the word “Prove,” the phrase reads either as a sensual sliding down to the ground, or as a pathetic and drooping bit of comedy, though the speaker is unaware of the presence of the audience, as the lovers are apparently not happy. However, at mm. 12-13 the smiling moment has been reached, and the speaker can evoke the “Bliss” if the “Kiss.” The kisses are of different lengths and, one presumes, intensity, and the actor does well to clearly portray the effect. In this way, one can hardly go too far. The melodramatic, the overblown and lustful lover can find full expression in this satirical song.

(footnote: At Ives’ suggestion, the male singer might find more humor in singing the entire song up the octave, even into falsetto for humorous effect.)

### Style Sheet for “The Side Show”

poem by Charles Edward Ives, parodying Pat Rooney (1844-1892)

"Is that Mister Riley, who keeps the hotel?"  
 is the tune that accomp'nies the trotting-track bell;  
 An old horse unsound  
 turns the merry-go-round,  
     making poor Mister Riley  
     look a bit like a Russian dance,  
     some speak of so highly,  
     as they do of Riley!

Two things challenge the young singer most here: the changing meter, and the somewhat high tessitura. The high tessitura and syllabic setting may seize up a young throat, so it is advisable to gently trace the arc of the melody one or more vowels. By separating the text from the melody, the singer can better gauge and solve the rhythmic challenges. Being another brief song, this can serve as an etude in song preparation. The payoff of putting all elements together will come a bit quicker than with a longer song.

In this piece the complex allusions and jokes suit the situation—a fraternity show—and audience for which this was originally created.<sup>15</sup> As described above (pp. 21-22), the song may still be entertaining and goofy without the extra associations, but it will be enhanced if the associations are printed in the program notes of a recital. A humorous sense of sliding through some phrases (e.g., mm. 15-17) will keep this brief song light and silly. The wry ending of this song allows for the personality of the singer to come to the fore. Indeed, this song begs for a schmaltzy and comedic performance from the young singer. Many find such a turn invigorating.

### Style Sheet for “The Light That Is Felt”

poem by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

A tender child of summers three,  
At night, while seeking her little bed,  
Paused on the dark stair timidly,  
“Oh, mother! take my hand,” said she;

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<sup>15</sup> Hitchcock, *129 Songs*, 468-9. “derived from lost DKE-show music”

“And then the dark will be light.”

We older children grope our way  
 From dark behind to dark before;  
 And only when our hands we lay  
 In Thine, O God! the night is day,  
 And there is darkness nevermore.

The range of this song matches “Songs My Mother Taught Me,” though the range and expressive challenges are not as large. There are many chromatic choices that Ives made that will gently challenge the young singer. Since the song lies mostly in the middle voice and at a soft dynamic, the student will be challenged to energize these phrases.

The omission by Ives of Whittier’s third stanza, especially the final line, renders the title almost obsolete.<sup>16</sup> But by including only the first two stanzas, Ives focuses the poem on the relationship between child and parent, and the childish adult’s relationship to God. Hopeful, but timid, this song often has very long phrases, and it challenges the clarity of diction for the young singer.

With careful planning of breathmarks, the young singer can create a smoother, more expressive legato feel for this song. Though breathing after each phrase and a half is acceptable, the young singer can commit to a longer phrase and thereby find a steadier expressive mode in a more efficient vocalism. This song will greatly benefit from attention to pure vowels linked together, as described in the exercise above (see the discussion of “must be smiling too” on p. 87).

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 428. The third stanza reads: “Reach downward to the sunless days/Wherein our guides are blind as we,/And faith is small and hope delays; Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,/And let us feel the light of Thee!”

Not a challenge for range, this song does gently confront the student's ability to count dotted rhythms, in a steady sixteenth-note pulse. The brevity of two pages, though, makes this exercise a moderate challenge. Another benefit for the teacher, is that this song isolates the young singer's tendency to collapse the torso to sustain soft singing. Correcting this in a short song allows the teacher to not worry about stamina issues.

In conclusion, these style sheets can provide the teacher with a technical map to be used as an introduction into more of Ives' songs. These are not intended to supercede the practical work done in each lesson, but are meant to harmonize with the teacher's technical focus and enhance the expressive skills of the student. The next chapter contains technical exercises that are described in more detail and that can be applied to each style sheet. These style sheets seek to provide specific information for each breath of each phrase without being dogmatic.

The student and teacher are encouraged to consider everything an experiment, and maintain the freedom of mind and body of such a tinkerer. As mentioned earlier, improving the singing voice is a personal and intimate work that seeks to change the pattern of identity of a person. Strong opinions, strong aversions, and harsh judgments are not helpful at this stage. Positivity and curiosity, when demonstrated by the teacher, can greatly support the student's technical work. More importantly, the full individual is engaged in this way, which resonates fully with Ives's philosophy of music-making.

## CHAPTER 3

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES AND CONTEXT

This chapter provides technical exercises that can be directly applied to each song in this style guide. The goal of this guide is to provide teachers of beginning students more expressive singing challenges from the songs of Charles Ives, and the technical exercises below intend to tap directly into the potential young artist's imagination and expressive energy as specifically relates to these songs.

Communicating more clearly is the hallmark of improved singing, and this requires more specific intentions from the singer themselves. The Style Sheets above described the specific ideas of the phrases in each song, and the exercises below describe how to intensify those specifics as well as how to apply the exercises to other songs in Ives's oeuvre and the canon.

The substance of Ives's priorities in art music had to do with spiritual and philosophical depth. He repeatedly rejected what he saw as the perfumed and over-styled manner with which many performers played European art music. He would have agreed even more with Pierre Bernac, who wrote that a performance is truly interesting when the performer gives a personal vision to the piece, and so the *presence* of the interpreter gives the piece its *expression*, not just a precise performance.<sup>1</sup> It is this challenge of being an artistic *presence* while performing a song that the beginning singer has before them.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernac, *French Song*, 3.

As an example, in the song “Two Little Flowers,” how does one avoid being an obtuse “operatic greyhound” or avoid performing in a “perfumed, over-styled” manner while still seeking authentic *presence*? Above all, Ives wants a dependable performer who is well-prepared, focused, and trustworthy. The singer must demonstrate that they know what they are doing and will do it vigorously and precisely. The listener then, without relaxing their mind, can take the performer’s competent cues and relax any anxiety *for the performer*. Steering toward these ideals, the enthusiastic singer may apply the exercises recommended here to find more *presence*.

Whether singing a hymn, folksong, ballad, aria or art song, this truth holds for any song performer. The fund of talent on which this musical cheque seeks to draw can, for a singer, be capitalized with the study of style and diction, and with considerable preparation of breath, gesture, and perspective. All these serve the illusion of spontaneity that the ideal interpreter creates. The following exercises are good for all singers, especially beginners: careful score study, text study and recitation, extensive breathing, silent rehearsal, and mirror rehearsal, among many other overlapping subdivisions, all feeding into each other. Exercises specific to those processes are described below.

### Score Study

Interpretation of song is extra-musical knowledge: how does one transfer the symbols from ink and paper to vivid and personal performance? The experienced vocalist uses the markings in the score to gain more insight into the physical setting and emotional mood that the composer has created for the words. Tempi, dynamics

and figurative gestures in the piano provide clues to the singer as to the mood of the song. To this the singer adds their expressive capability and the courage of their vocalism.

One brief example can be shown in the song “The World’s Wanderers.” The piano material has the syncopated left hand and the sixteenth note figure in the right hand which gives the song a forward motion evoking a curious, though serene, mood. By noticing this, the singer’s breathing can alter to reflect the mood introduced by the first two measures of the song.<sup>2</sup> For example, with this introductory music the student will not breathe to shout for joy, or breathe to chuckle appreciatively; however, they can sense the questioning mood of the song and breathe as if to ask a question. These two measures of the right hand repeat three times, inquisitively almost, and return at the song’s end once. This gesture serves to bracket the questioning of the text with the questioning of the piano at the beginning and end. This unifying gesture continues with the piano material in m. 16 where a small sixteenth gesture intertwines the upper and lower register to return to original “question” posed in the piano at the beginning of the song, where the repeat indicates. Should the singer enter the pianist’s perspective more fully during preparation, the performance will fall much more in line with the composer’s intentions. Score study here, asks the singer to study the piano material.

### Text Study

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<sup>2</sup> The teacher can instruct the student to breathe with energetic curiosity or alertness. This freshness, when found, gives the song excellent momentum from the very first sound. Such subtle, technical genuineness can be achieved by even the most naïve singers.

When preparing to sing an art song, the singer should study the poem the composer sets, for in almost all cases the poem was the inspiration for the creation of an art song. A simple exercise that intrigues many novice singers, in the author's experience, is to rephrase or translate a poem into everyday speech. For example, the text of the song "Afterglow" written by James Fenimore Cooper, Jr., can be paraphrased as follows:

(Original)

At the quiet close of day,  
Gently yet the willows sway;

When the sunset light is low,  
Lingers still the afterglow;  
Beauty tarries loth to die,

Every lightest fantasy  
Lovelier grows in memory,  
Where the truer beauties lie.

(Paraphrase)

At sunset, if it's quiet,  
I can hear the trees swaying  
gently in the wind,

Just after the sun dips down,  
there's a glow there,  
And this glow almost doesn't  
want to go away.

It's like a metaphor for beautiful  
memories and dreams that are  
more true and precious the  
more distant they get.

By stripping the poet's meter and syntax but keeping the images and the basic ideas, the paraphrase can show the poet's art more clearly. And, of equal importance, trying to find the right words to paraphrase the poet's thought is an entertaining way to engage the student's sense of poetry.

Shirley Emmons and Stanley Sonntag in their book on song recitals describe another method to get deeper into a poem: "Substitute a word of absolutely opposite meaning for each salient word as written. It is surprising how this strips away complacency, opens you to new thoughts, and makes you sensitive to the



poem in its original form.”<sup>1</sup> Any method to assist the beginner in entering the poem in more detail is welcome at the stage.

### Diction

Two exercises for diction that greatly increase the clarity of word-image are (1) to sing or speak text on the vowels within each word, omitting the consonants, and (2) to sing or speak using a small impediment between the front teeth such as a small cork or small carrot.<sup>2</sup> The former ensures clarity of vowels (and therefore improved resonance) and promotes legato singing. It will sound nonsensical at first, but the point is to clarify and purify the vowels in each word, and to prolong each vowel so that it fills each note value, most especially the second half of each one. The latter exercise with the impediment between the front teeth induces more flexibility and energy from the consonant-articulating lips and tongue, while also promoting a taller buccal cavity near the molars (and therefore more resonance).<sup>3</sup> It is important to encourage the student to clearly pronounce the words, so that they energize their articulators as described above.

Teachers should remind the performer that clarity of word-image is the priority. One way for the teacher to do this is by singing the song as unintelligibly as possible for the student. In this way the teacher can quickly and effectively show the

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<sup>1</sup> Shirley Emmons and Stanley Sonntag, *The Art of the Song Recital* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), 191.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Ann Hart finds much improvement with both of these in her instruction of singers.

<sup>3</sup> This impediment exercise may be difficult to implement with students who have excess jaw tension or a sensitive gag reflex. It is a useful tool, but should be used sparingly so as not to add a different kind of tension

real effects of poor diction. For example, the song “Autumn” contains imagery and syntax that personifies the planet and the sun. Several details in the first few lines of poetry are crucial to the listener’s grasp of the entire song.

Earth rests!  
 Her work is done, her fields lie bare,  
 And 'ere the night of winter comes  
 To hush her song and close her tired eyes,  
 She turns her face for the sun to smile upon,  
 And radiantly, through Fall's bright glow, he smiles  
 And brings the Peace of God!

The [θ], or Theta, is crucial to signifying the word-image of “earth” and giving it separation before the word “rests.” If this is overlooked, or indistinct, the import of the song is obscured to the listener. Several other small details are key: “work is”—correct glottal [ʔ] before “is,” “fields lie”—voiced consonant clusters (shown underlined) [ldzl], and “Fall’s bright glow”—two consonant clusters (shown underlined) [lzbr] and [tgl].

Mindful of the archaic syntax often used in these songs, the performer seeks the most lucid diction so that the listener grasps the word-images as immediately as possible, and therefore absorbs the poetic flow in accord with the flow of the music. Should the listener only grasp the meaning of a phrase at the beginning of the succeeding phrase, Ives’s intentions are diffused. His forceful insistence on a substantive music gives the singer a clear directive that they must be committed to clear diction.

Bernac notes that “the sonority and rhythm of the words are an integral part of the music itself.”<sup>4</sup> Reciting the poem repeatedly deepens the personal relationship the singer has with the words, and grants the singer access to the subtextual layers of the poem. These layers are formed from the singer’s experiences and beliefs, and as the singer cultivates the poem, these layers accrue.

Far more substantial than mere memorization is the development of a tangible connection to the poem involving the specific senses and the imaginative exploration of the speaker’s physical world. Added to this visceral connection is the accumulated sense that the singer does not need to tell their mouth what to do. This exploration with the text takes much time, attention and repetition, but it allows the singer to discover the poetic melodies within each line, couplet and quatrain.<sup>5</sup> So, it is only by finding the smaller music in the words, and delivering them clearly, that a singer can begin to find the larger music in the music. For Bernac, this textual clarity is of “elementary politeness to the listener, and of fundamental honesty to the poet.”<sup>6</sup>

For Ives, clear diction was an important facet of a good singer. He vehemently opposed, in all music, the merely beautiful if he sensed an underlying decadence or overly mannered style (read, all vowels all the time). It is easy to

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<sup>4</sup> Bernac, *French Song*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the text to the song “Waltz” is filled with onomatopoeic phrases like the dancing round sounds in “round and round” and “whirling throng,” and the broad vowels in “far and wide’s the fame.” The vowels form a bright or dark (or crying or boasting) collection of sounds that works with the piano and voice material to make the song more evocative of the scene and tone of the speaker.

<sup>6</sup> Bernac, *French Song*, 3.

speculate that the personality and egotism, the melodramatic buffoonery, which surrounded many opera singers irked Ives at the core of his musical and philosophical core.<sup>7</sup>

### Recitation

Emmons and Sonntag describe the challenge for the recitalist, writing, “The text presents at once the greatest glory for and the heaviest burden on the singer. Every vocal technical decision to be made must be filtered through the demands of the text this is the singer's responsibility to the poet. *The singer must communicate to the audience what he believes the composer believed the poet meant.*”<sup>8</sup> Recitation helps the student further understand the demands of the text. There are four useful technical exercises, among many, for recitation:

- (1) Reciting text slowly, clearly, and loudly for an audience of two thousand,
- (2) Whispering text quietly and intensely as a secret,
- (3) Speaking text angrily and quickly (notably with vigorous physical movement), and
- (4) Reciting text as a quasi-monologue, with a clear emotional expressivity based in the text itself.

These exercises are ordered in this way so as to gain energy from the first, intensity from the second, specificity from the third, and finally the emotional content of the actual text in the fourth. One of the challenges of teaching beginners is to energize

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<sup>7</sup> Based on his writings, one can guess Ives heard singers for whom the beauty of their tone far outweighed the value of the music they performed.

<sup>8</sup> Emmons, *Song Recital*, 111.

their breathing and mind into the text itself. Once this is discovered, their singing will clearly benefit.

These energizing exercises are especially helpful in the lower, softer, and more sustained songs, where energy ebbs easily for the inexperienced singer. For example, we can apply these exercises to the song “Songs My Mother Taught Me.” The pauses in the score that Ives indicated are revealed as psychologically expressive when reciting the text alone. Before the speaker repeats the phrase “songs my mother taught me” at mm. 28-29, why is there a rest with fermata at the end of m. 26? The work done on recitation of the text will answer this.

The ownership, for lack of a better word, of the text by the student therefore increases the more they play with the text. Well before singing the song, this is a large part of how a performer builds the *presence* that Bernac values. These energizing exercises simultaneously draw the singer into ever closer proximity to the text and propel the word-images ever further away from them, toward an audience.

The exercises guide them along, challenging the student very specifically to achieve simple, broad goals. The teacher may indicate the sonority of vowels as relating to the mood of the text (e.g. dark vowels like [u]s and [o]s that subdue the sounds as the mood is subdued) and ask the student to notice other distinctions. The teacher may also point out that the student expressed anger by using the consonants differently. Exploring this field of sonorous possibilities invites the student into the text as an expressive agent with responsibilities and tasks, not as a mere sound-maker.

### Extensive Breathing

Though many are available, two breathing exercises will increase the fundamental ability of a beginning singer to sustain long phrases and develop more resonance: (1) pyramid breathing, and (2) breath locating. Both exercises should avoid the sensation of “crowding” the lungs or of “holding” or “storing” the breath. Richard Miller advises in his influential book on pedagogy that “if any tension is sensed by teacher or student, then the exercise is being done improperly.”<sup>9</sup>

The pyramid breathing exercise stages are as follows: inhale, suspend, and exhale.<sup>10</sup> Counting silently to five for each stage the student will maintain an empty throat, an unforced expansion in the torso, and a loosened hollow feeling throughout the body for as long as possible. Most importantly there should be “minimal inward motion of the umbilical-epigastric region.”<sup>11</sup> The teacher will increase the count for each stage by one, until the student reaches ten.

The breath location exercise is an enlarging exercise. It enhances the student’s proprioception as relates to breathing. First, the student is asked to breathe only in to their right lung (of course this is impossible, but with some willingness the student will see the value of the exercise). Then only the left lung. Then both lungs. Though air is entering the other lung, by locating the breath on one side they consciously release the intercostal and serratus anterior muscles surrounding and within the ribs. The student should feel an enlarged sense of

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1986), 31.

<sup>10</sup> The name pyramid comes from the increase in duration of each stage.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, *Structure of Singing*, 31.

breath after this. One can also locate the breath in the back of the torso, then the front, and then the entire torso. As well, one can encourage a feeling of breathing behind the spine, to find more hollowness, especially the upper part of the spine.

Emotional breathing provides a simple lesson to the beginner in the power of breath. The teacher may instruct the student to find one phrase of a song they prefer. They will repeat this phrase, but with a different emotion as they breathe each time to begin the phrase. Such emotions as fright, anger, silliness, swooning, and confusion are effective here. The student is asked to observe the differences in vocal energy, throat openness, and power with each emotion. The student is also encouraged to experiment and make mistakes. These exercises will allow the student to find a greater sense of breath intake and energization than previously discovered.

#### Mirror rehearsal

The appearance of the beginning singer is often the lowest priority in their work. Due to time constraints and technical goals, the visual aspect is left until later. One often finds that the students have a dour, or glazed, look of concentration. To even these beginners, we find that a specific facial expression (such as flirtatiousness, innocent eagerness, barely suppressing laughter, or smoldering anger) energizes the breath and the sound often more than simple admonishments to smile.

There is also a simple biofeedback loop with these facial gestures that releases energy. The mirror aids this exercise by showing the student exactly how much more vibrant they appear when “playing” with these facial expressions. The

singer is encouraged to experiment in their practice room. This specifically contributes to the idea that expressive singing should be sought among even the beginning singers.

A small amount of negative practice in this exercise is useful too. The teacher may ask the student to approximate a look of utter boredom as they sing the song. The teacher may ask the student to observe how difficult it is to make it through the longer phrases in songs like "Afterglow" and "Songs My Mother Taught Me." Posture can also be practiced negatively with the mirror to guide the student. Visual feedback, at this stage, makes one more aware of one's body.

#### Silent rehearsal

The silent rehearsal is very useful to discover clearer intention with each phrase's breath and to improve the visual presentation of a song.<sup>12</sup> The student is instructed to perform, to breathe and mouth the words as if they were singing, but make no sound while the accompaniment continues. The mirror greatly assists this exercise. The teacher may instruct the student to notice when the intensity dulls in their eyes, as this is most often just as they breathe and near the ends of phrases. If the student continues to embody the entire mood of the phrase through the rests in the vocal line, they will sense the intensifying presence they are producing. The teacher may encourage this as a simple, yet very expressive, choice.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, in the song "Songs My Mother Taught Me," the student can breathe and sing with two very different intentions: (1) imagine the mother being sad, or, (2) with more specific imaginative work, imagine the specific song, the tear on her cheek, the color and feel of the shawl she wore, the sound of the rocking chair she loved for so many years, and the precise scent she wore, perhaps as a gift from her husband. The student can engage the imagination and the senses to make the scene more vibrant to them, and therefore more vibrant for the listener.



The silent rehearsal technique saves the analytical ear of the beginning singer from entering the creative process. Then, once the singer finally makes sound, they are often surprised at the power and ease of their singing. This exercise is especially useful in preparing the songs “Autumn,” “Feldeinsamkeit,” and “Slow March” which have long introductory piano material. The student must, if they are to become an expressive singer, perform even though no voice is singing. This spellbinding effect of a singer creating a *presence* is supremely important at the beginning of any song.

Miller insists that, “in the end, traditional vocalism is based on efficient vocal production. Artistry cannot be realized without the technical means for its presentation. Systematic vocal technique and artistic expression are inseparable; they comprise the structure of singing.”<sup>13</sup> In this widely accepted sense, the teacher is right to focus on technical foundations of classical singing. However, it is not paradoxical to assert that a novice singer can focus, as discussed above, on a more emotional breath (breathing in a sense of awe, or questioning, or heartfelt nostalgia) and substantially committed textual work (to find more meaningful layers of connection to the poem) and thereby find more beautiful tone. Indeed, each person powers every sound they make with their breath, with the desire to express themselves initiating the inhalation. By focusing on and clarifying this pre-breath moment, the novice singer grounds the vocalism in intention.

In conclusion, I believe the guide will assist the teacher in more directly activating the potential artistic sensitivity of the beginning artist. By linking the

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<sup>13</sup> Miller, *Structure of Singing*, xvi.

challenge of introducing expressive art song to beginning singers with these selected songs of Charles Ives, I hope the teacher finds respite from the “prettier” songs that are commonly assigned and performed. A more powerful and sensitive alternative must be offered in opposition to the powerful forces of commercialized popular music. Classical vocalism offers the more expressive, substantive product, but it is so often diluted by an exasperating focus on the sound of the voice rather than the expressive value. As teachers insist on more expressive singing over more beautiful singing (though, of course without disregarding beauty completely) the classical vocal world can become more recognized as a more tangibly authentic art form than the lucrative and widely distributed vocal forms of pop music.

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