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FINDING MY PLACE IN THE PIAZZA: AN EXPLORATION OF LEARNING
AND PERFORMING A LEAD ROLE DURING A PANDEMIC

by

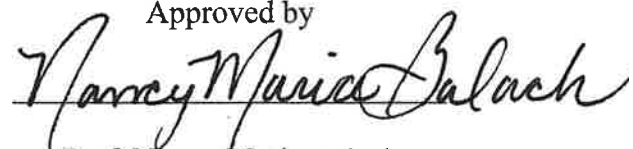
Emma Elizabeth Johnson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

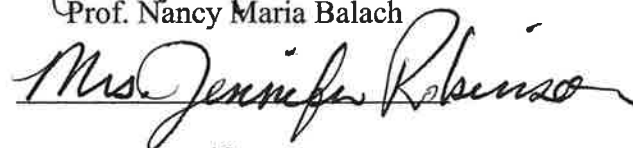
Oxford

May 2022

Approved by



Prof. Nancy Maria Balach



Mrs. Jennifer Robinson



Prof. Christie Rotarius

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude for everyone who made “The Light in the Piazza” production at the Ford center happen, especially Mr. Blake Ewing and Prof. Amanda Johnston. This experience was life changing for me and your guidance means more than you’ll ever know. I also want to thank my lovely stage mother, Mrs. Mary Haskell for all her advice and help during this production. Lastly, I want to thank my amazing cast mates, especially Isaiah Traylor. Thank you for always believing in me during the entire rehearsal process.

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ABSTRACT

Finding my Place in the Piazza: An Exploration of Learning and Performing a Lead Role during a Pandemic

The following thesis is a reflection of one student's process as she learns a lead role in a musical amidst a global pandemic. The author begins with why she chose to be a performer and what has led her to this moment. She examines how significantly the pandemic has affected the performing arts job sector. The author explores her first exposure to the musical "The Light in the Piazza" and the role of Clara in a scenes program at the university which took place in the spring semester of 2021. The thesis then follows her journey through the abnormal virtual audition process after finding out about the full-fledged stage production of "The Light in the Piazza," which was being planned for the Fall of 2021. The bulk of the thesis focuses on the rehearsal process for the show. She recounts specific moments from music coachings, as well as moments from staging rehearsals with her director. She explores what it was like to learn a role as big as this while navigating the protocols put in place by COVID-19, as well as a cumulative reflection of the entire process. She also talks about her senior recital, which ended with a song from the musical.

PREFACE

A passionate person can be described as someone who has very strong feelings or a strong belief about something specific. I consider myself to be a very lucky person because I've known what my passion is and what I was born to do since I was seven years old. Some people never find their spark for anything, or find it rather late in life, but I've known that I belonged on stage since I was cast as the "Earth" in a community theater camp production of "Vacation on Mars," (a riveting tale that follows a family's vacation to explore the solar system). Other people knew it too. My mom noticed it the second I came home from camp and had learned every single note, dance move, and staging direction so I could make all my Barbies do it over and over again. Or maybe she realized it when I was three years old and would sing "We're Marching to Zion" loudly as we walked through the grocery store, intrigued by the level of attention I was receiving. She enrolled me in voice and piano lessons when I was seven, although the piano lessons didn't interest me as much as the voice lessons seemed to, and I will now graduate with my Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance.



Figure 1 "Vacation on Mars" performance

I set out to become a “triple threat”: someone who is skilled in singing, dancing, and acting. I did many productions growing up, both musicals and straight plays, in addition to being a middle school competitive dancer. My dream was to be on the stage, but I didn’t know exactly what that meant for me. Although I had been classically trained, I hadn’t viewed opera as an option until I was selected to attend Kentucky Governor’s School for the Arts (GSA) my sophomore year of high school for vocal music. GSA is a three-week intensive arts program that is very competitive and rarely accepts sophomores, so it was a very exciting moment for me to see my name in black and white on the list.

When it came time to look at colleges and programs, my mind was set on going to school for musical theatre. I put up with a lot of arguments from my choir director and voice teachers, who all agreed I needed to major in vocal performance due to the naturally classical timbre of my voice. I stood my ground and started my 2018 Fall semester of college as a BFA student in the Department of Theatre & Film at the University of Mississippi. Although I was studying theatre, I wanted to continue voice lessons to keep up my training. I was told about voice studio placement auditions in the Department of Music. I auditioned and was placed with Mrs. Jennifer Robinson, who is still my teacher to this day.

I quickly found that I felt much more comfortable and at home in the Music department than I did anywhere else on campus. I auditioned for my first opera that fall and was cast in the ensemble of Gilbert & Sullivan’s *HMS Pinafore* for the spring semester. This was my first time performing on the beautiful Gertrude C. Ford Center stage, and it wouldn’t be my last. Mrs. Robinson convinced me to participate in the

Mississippi NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) competition that same spring as well. I ended up winning 1st place in Classical Freshman Treble, as well as 2nd place in Lower College Musical Theater. I remember that day vividly; how excited I was and how proud I was of myself. I had already been considering changing my major, but this day was what really solidified it. By the beginning of my sophomore year, I was officially a vocal performance major. I didn't know it at the time, but I would only get one so-called "normal" semester of being a music major.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER I: COVID-19.....	10
CHAPTER II: Spring 2021 Scenes program.....	13
CHAPTER III: Auditions for Fall 2021 Production.....	18
CHAPTER IV: Fall 2021 Rehearsal process.....	25
CHAPTER V: Adam Guettel Residency.....	52
CHAPTER VI: <i>The Light in the Piazza</i> in the Gertrude C. Ford Center.....	56
CHAPTER VII: Senior Recital.....	63
CHAPTER VIII: Reflection.....	65
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	67
APPENDIX.....	68

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	“Vacation on Mars” Performance.....	V
Figure 2	“From the Met to Broadway and back again”	16
Figure 3	Zoe and I as Margaret and Clara.....	17
Figure 4	Original <i>The Light in the Piazza</i> flier.....	18
Figure 5	Arrows indicated in score.....	26
Figure 6	Example of overlapping lines.....	27
Figure 7	Dramatic scene with Margaret and Clara.....	30
Figure 8	Dissonant “la la” section.....	33
Figure 9	Official Piazza Promo poser.....	34
Figure 10	Photo in front of Phi Mu Fountain.....	35
Figure 11	“Madonna with Angels”	39
Figure 12	Cover of Original Broadway Cast Recording.....	40
Figure 13	Master class participants.....	47
Figure 14	October 7 th Rehearsal.....	48
Figure 15	Mary Haskell and I receive direction.....	49
Figure 16	Receiving my costume plot.....	51
Figure 17	Adam Guettel’s message in my score.....	55
Figure 18	Socially distanced & masked.....	56
Figure 19	Receiving Notes from Mr. Ewing.....	59
Figure 20	Singing “The Beauty Is”	61
Figure 21	My Family after Friday’s performance.....	62
Figure 22	Singing “The Light in the Piazza” at my recital.....	63

CHAPTER I: COVID-19

Reality of Performance after March 2020

On March 12, 2020, forty-one playhouses on Broadway went dark due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Metropolitan Opera closed that same day. Both would not return until late 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic was an obvious struggle and adjustment for everyone, but no one was hit harder than artists.

While there have been improvements since 2020, the performing arts sector in America is recovering the slowest from the devastating impact of the pandemic. Research from Americans for the Arts found that artists/creatives were, and remain among, the most severely affected segment of the nation's workforce, with 63% experiencing unemployment and 95% losing creative income at the height of the pandemic (Balk). Research also found that pre-pandemic, the arts industry was a \$919.7 billion industry that supported 5.2 million jobs and represented 4.3% of the nation's economy. As of January 2022, arts jobs have rebounded to 2.21 million, but are still far from pre-pandemic numbers. (COVID-19).

Broadway reopened Summer of 2021, but not without facing some losses. Broadway lost an estimated \$35 million in gross revenue each week it was closed. Many popular shows, including *Frozen* and *Mean Girls*, never reopened, being killed by the shutdown. While many artists found ways to still create during the pandemic, whether via virtual performances or social media singalongs, most would argue that it was not as fulfilling or successful as it would have been on a stage with a live audience. Even though Broadway is now reopened, it is still facing many cancellations due to surges in

cases. The surge of the Omicron variant caused multiple shutdowns in December and January.

Although there have been some setbacks regarding the performance world getting back to normal, everyday it seems to inch closer to what it was before March 2020. Arts attendance was up 63% in December 2021, despite the list of protocols that are still in place, which includes audience members staying masked the entire performance. Many new shows have opened on Broadway since the reopening and experienced success, including new revivals of *The Music Man* and *Funny Girl*. Broadway's signature slogan: "The show must go on" still reigns true, despite the economic and emotional toll this pandemic has put on performing artists.

How COVID-19 directly impacted me

March 12th, 2020, the day everything shut down, was very surreal for me. Concert singers, The University of Mississippi's auditioned mixed ensemble, had been preparing to attend the Southern ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) Conference for a semester and a half. Being asked to perform at ACDA is a very prestigious honor for a choir, so we were all looking forward to this experience. Our director, Dr. Trott, was very excited and so were we. We were all packed onto a bus on our way to Mobile, Alabama, when all our phones vibrated with an email from the chancellor, informing us that there would be an extra week of spring break. The bus was filled with a buzz as we all discussed what this meant for the rest of the semester and the trip for which we had prepared. We were stopped at a gas station when Dr. Trott stood up at the front of the bus, tears in his eyes, to announce that we were turning the bus around

and heading back to Oxford. Everyone was shocked. The entire ride back home was spent receiving emails about everything I had been looking forward to that spring semester being canceled. I was confused and worried about what the future had in store.

The hardest part about that spring was my piano class and how it shifted to online learning. Since we all did not own keyboards, we all had to print paper keyboard templates to maintain a level of fairness. We did all our assignments and tests videoing us playing on paper. It may seem obvious, but I learned first-hand that it is extremely difficult to play music that you cannot hear. Many tears were shed over my paper piano template out of frustration, so much so that I tore it up and burned it once the semester ended.

The worst part about the semesters spent over zoom was the lack of performance opportunities, which led to me losing my sense of purpose. Being a music major is hard enough during a normal year, but during a pandemic it's almost impossible. I am also a perfectionist who must plan out everything, which made the level of uncertainty surrounding the situation very hard for me to process. I had times where I wanted to drop out and give up singing completely. It didn't feel worth it to me anymore. Singing in a mask and shield six feet away from my pianist, barely being able to hear the music, was not fulfilling to me. I knew my professors were doing the best they could with the given circumstances, but I did not feel as if I was progressing. I couldn't remember why I was doing this in the first place anymore. That little girl that used to sing in the grocery store, demanding all eyes on her, had been lost. I knew something had to happen soon to change my viewpoint, or I was going to give up. The passion I had once before was waning, and it upset me more than anyone knew.

CHAPTER II: Spring 2021 Scenes Program

Beginnings of Studying Clara

Despite the protocols put in place, UM Opera Theatre still managed to have a successful scenes program during the spring semester, which included the spring program: “From the Met to Broadway and Back again,” which we performed Sunday, April 18th. We were masked and separated from each other with plexi-glass walls, but it was still an opportunity to perform on the Gertrude C. Ford Center stage, and I’d take anything I could get. At the beginning of the semester, we didn’t know what would ultimately happen, but a lovely scenes program transpired. This scenes program was also the beginning of an amazing character study that would follow me along my journey of finding my purpose once again.

On Saturday, January 23rd, 2021, we all received our scenes assignment from Prof. Julia Aubrey, Director of Opera Theatre at the time. I was assigned to play the role of Clara Johnson in the scene titled “Statues and Stories,” which is the opening scene of *The Light in the Piazza* by Adam Guettel. In the scene, Clara and Margaret, Clara’s mother, have just arrived in Florence, Italy and Margaret is pointing out all the important sites to Clara. Clara is amazed, having never seen anything quite like this before growing up sheltered in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. I was really thrilled with this scene assignment, as I’ve always loved the music in this show and always been interested in the role of Clara. Although I had never sung any of her pieces before, it was one of my dream roles that I wanted to explore more thoroughly.

We started our rehearsals on February 8th with Prof. Aubrey. I began with a deep character study and later began exploring my relationship with my scene partner, Zoe, who was assigned to play my mother, Margaret. In this situation, it was extremely important to find ways to show a connection with your partner, as we couldn't touch or get remotely close to each other. The opening scene is short, only about three minutes in length, so it's impossible to convey the depth of Margaret and Clara's relationship in this amount of time. Our sessions focused a lot on only the emotions showcased in this specific scene, so I committed a lot to just acting younger than I really was and being amazed at the many sites to see in Florence, Italy. The most subtle detail I had to incorporate into this role was figuring out how to portray Clara's traumatic past. It's obvious that there something isn't quite right about Clara, but it doesn't seem that concerning just yet in the show.

We staged the scene on March 10th with Prof. Aubrey. Before the music started, we had a small page of dialogue that was adapted from the musical, as the show does not start with any conversations before the duet. Prof. Aubrey wrote this dialogue to bring more cohesion and sense to the duet. The scene began with Clara running on, amazed with her surroundings, and paying little attention to her mother, who has her nose stuck in a travel book. As stated before, we did the scene between plexi-glass walls, so I had little to no interaction with my duet partner, which was fitting for some moments and hard for others. The scene features a lot of back and forth for Clara; one moment she's discovering a new world and paying no attention to her mother, the next moment one can sense a strong mother/daughter relationship. We worked on this a lot with Prof. Aubrey and made the protocols work for us. My favorite part of the scene is when the projection

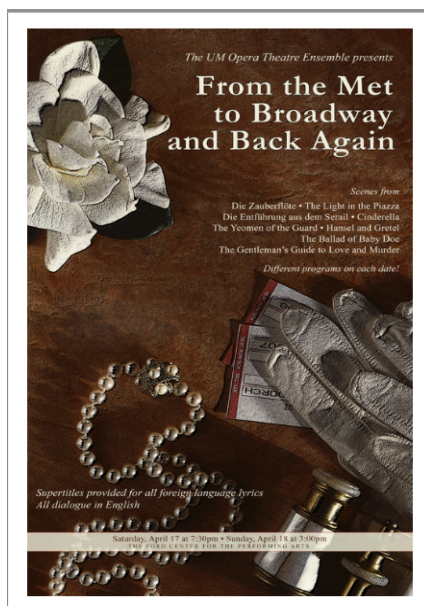
behind us changes to Michelangelo's famous David statue, and Clara runs up and exclaims "that's a completely naked statue!"

Music Coachings

The opening scene is not one of the hardest songs for the role of Clara, but it was still challenging in its own right, with some unexpected harmonies. Zoe and I had our first music coaching for the piece on February 9th, 2021, with Prof Johnston, the UM Opera Theatre music director. The coaching was a successful run-through. We focused on keeping even rhythms, specifically on the repeated "Firenze" in the middle of the song, and cutting off at the same time, which just consists of us putting the ending consonant on the same beat. We also focused on various diction aspects, such as maintaining the clarity of the vowel. This piece is very rangy for Clara, jumping from the middle of the staff to above the staff quickly, so one of the most prominent pieces of advice given by Prof. Johnston was to sing more in the mix part of my voice, which is the blending between my head voice and chest voice. I also was told to work on preparing both my high spaces and low spaces the same way with enough space in the back of my throat.

Our next music coaching took place March 9th, 2021. We started the coaching by running through the entire piece once, as due to the number of scenes we had in the program we hadn't gone through the song together with Prof. Johnston in a month. Within this number, there are a lot of moments where there is a break in the singing and Clara makes side comments to Margaret about things she sees. One of the comments that was given to me to work on with this was to pitch everything higher and focus on my intonation during these moments. Clara also does not sing for most of the beginning of

the piece, so I was instructed to work on making sure my entrances are energized and every note is sung through when I do finally enter. Another interesting aspect of the piece, that I explore more later on with the full role, is Clara’s pronunciation of Italian words. The word “Firenze” is pronounced multiple times in this piece and, even though I’ve studied Italian diction and know how it should be pronounced, a character like Clara would not know how it is properly pronounced. There is also a section of the song where Clara and Margaret sing the same line but pass it off to one another in a call and response type of way, so we worked on matching the intensity and dynamics of the person who starts it, which is normally Margaret. There is also one part where Clara exclaims “We’re on vacation” seemingly out of nowhere, and I continued to struggle with the music rhythm of this line and connecting it to my voice and body. Progress that I noticed from the last coaching was the use of my mixed voice and how much easier this was for me with the piece this time around.



“Statues and Stories” Adam Guettel
 from *The Light in the Piazza*

Margaret Zoe Bofill
 Clara Emma Johnson

Set in the 1950’s, the story centers on Margaret Johnson, a wealthy Southern woman, and Clara, her daughter. This scene opens the

musical with Margaret and Clara enjoying their first day of vacation in Florence. They wander around the piazza admiring the sights and sounds of the lovely Italian city.

Figure 2 “From the Met to Broadway and Back again” Scenes Program

There were only two music coachings before we began running numbers with staging. Our tech week took place April 12th-April 16th, which consisted of adding costumes, lights, and everything in between. Since this show was split up into two days with two different sets of scenes, our Piazza scene dress rehearsal did not take place until Friday, April 16th. We received notes after the rehearsal from Prof. Johnston, with my main note being to continue to stay engaged and supported through every note, keeping the spin, and keeping my entries energized and motivated. The performance took place April 18th, 2021, and I felt good about our performance in the duet. The only negative was when my large straw hat almost slid entirely off my head towards the end of the performance.



Figure 3 Zoe and I as Margaret and Clara Johnson

CHAPTER III: Auditions for Fall 2021 Production

Virtual Auditions

I spent the summer of 2021 on the side of a highway in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Two months I slept in what used to be a barn with scorpions and roaches running rampant. I was at a Young Artists Program entitled Opera in the Ozarks, which was a great opportunity to perform and meet new people, but the organization and the infrastructure was less than ideal. An example of said organization/infrastructure would be when a deer died one month in, and no one discarded it. Singing in an outdoor theatre in ninety-degree heat with the smell of a decaying animal is not what I envisioned for my summer when I originally sent in my audition, but I made the best of it. Despite the circumstances, I did come out of this experience with more knowledge on how to be flexible and resilient. I also met some lovely people and made good connections while there. All this to say, when I was sitting in my dorm room staring at a roach and received a text from my boyfriend asking if I “knew about the musical that was just emailed out to the music department,” I was excited and couldn’t open my Gmail app fast enough.



Figure 4 Original *The Light in the Piazza* flier emailed out

I remember gasping with excitement on my bed and my roommate asking me if I was okay. UM Opera Theatre was putting on *The Light in the Piazza* in November and, even better, was bringing in a guest director by the name of Blake McIver Ewing. The show was being done to celebrate Elizabeth Spencer's 100th year anniversary of her birth. Elizabeth Spencer, a Mississippi native, is the author of the 1960 novella *The Light in the Piazza* on which the musical is based. When I received the email announcing who our guest director would be, I immediately read his bio and was amazed by all his accomplishments and stage credits. I couldn't believe I was going to be directed by and learn from someone with as much professional experience and knowledge as he had. This production was something entirely new and different from anything UM Opera Theatre had done before. After reading the email I called my boyfriend, mostly speaking gibberish as I was ecstatic for this opportunity. I didn't shut up about it to my friends in Arkansas for the next three days.

The email was sent out July 15th, with the video auditions deadline being July 30th. I was stuck on the side of the highway performing in multiple operas for another week, which didn't give me a lot of time to prepare a new song. There also wasn't anywhere particularly great to shoot a new self-tape unless I wanted my background to be the woods. A self-tape is what many singers/actors refer to when an audition is done through digital casting. A positive that came out of the pandemic was the need to learn how to shoot a self-tape, since everything turned virtual. My entire audition for the summer program I was currently at was done virtually, so I already had a wealth of videos to use for future auditions. I went back and forth between learning a new piece

and shooting a new video once I returned home to Oxford, but the idea was too stressful to me, given the time frame, and I worried about getting my materials in on time.

I left Arkansas on July 24th, which gave me six days to send in my audition materials, which consisted of my audition form, resume, headshot, and two links to video recordings. The audition information specifically stated “Two contrasting 1-minute selections from legit Musical Theatre or Classical repertoire (Up-tempo and Ballad, or Musical Theatre and Art song, etc. – No Rock or pop songs).” I trimmed two videos I had previously made to one minute and sent them in, going with one musical theatre piece and one aria. My aria was “Mein Herr Marquis” from Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, which I had learned over zoom voice lessons. My musical theatre piece was “Vanilla Ice Cream” from *She Loves Me*. This piece has been my go-to audition song since I had won NATS my freshman year of college. Both pieces are solid audition songs that I will surely use for many years to come, so it only seemed fitting that I used them for this audition as well.

Zoom Callback

It didn’t take long after emailing my audition materials to our musical director, Prof. Amanda Johnston, to receive an email back about a callback which, due to Mr. Ewing not yet being in Mississippi, would be held on zoom. I received the email July 31st informing me that I was being considered for the role of Clara Johnson and my callback would take place at 6:30 on August 6th. I was given musical excerpts to learn that would be performed over the video call, as well as a scene from the show with Mr. Ewing reading with me. For all the musical excerpts, Prof. Johnston supplied me with

practice tracks that included the vocal melody line, as well as tracks that were only the accompaniment for me to play over zoom during the callback.

I spent the next couple of days before the callback reading through the scene and drilling the music. The first excerpt was 24 measures of the title song “The Light in the Piazza,” Clara’s big solo sung at the beginning of act two. The other excerpt was 21 bars from Clara’s duet with Fabrizio Nacarelli which takes place at the end of act one, “Say it Somehow.” This duet would later be one of the hardest songs for me to learn throughout the entire show.

The scene that I was to read at the callback with Mr. Ewing is arguably the most dramatic and biggest turning point for Clara in the entire show. The scene happens at the very beginning of act one, before Clara sings “The Light in the Piazza,” with her mother. The scene marks the moment where Clara finally fully stands up to her mother about gaining her independence and doing what she wants to do, which is to marry Fabrizio. The scene is probably the most emotional moment in the show, especially for Clara, so I understood why it was picked to showcase our acting abilities.

The day came for my callback, and I couldn’t have been more excited, albeit a little nervous. I wore one of my favorite dresses and set up my computer in front of an aesthetically pleasing background in my apartment, the same place I’d done all my zoom voice lessons and coachings for the past two years. Fifteen minutes before my callback, I tested my internet through zoom and realized that I had no connection. This sent me into a panic, and I restarted my router multiple times but to no avail. I decided to try and rush to my boyfriend’s house to zoom from there, texting Prof. Johnston to let her know I might be late for the callback due to internet issues that were entirely out of my control. I

got to his house and set up my laptop on a stool and a stack of books, as he doesn't have a designated zoom "area" as I do. I went to finally join the zoom, feeling very flustered at this point and, just my luck, the internet wasn't working at his house either. One thing we've also all learned during this pandemic is that technology is great and a wonderful thing, until it refuses to work. I restarted my laptop and called Prof. Johnston, letting her know about my multitude of technological problems that seemed to keep happening. I was worried about making the wrong first impression on Mr. Ewing, since I was now 15 minutes late for my callback. Thankfully they were both understanding, and she rescheduled my audition to 8 pm, as they had to go ahead and see other people for now. This gave me a chance to calm down, warm back up, and hopefully fix my internet connection.

My internet finally started working again and my callback began at 8 pm. This was my first time talking to Mr. Ewing, so I was nervous for how that would go. He was very sweet, and even though this was just a short thirty-minute callback, I knew I would thoroughly enjoy working with him. I sang through the section from the duet first and then moved to the scene reading with Mr. Ewing. He gave wonderful direction for me to work with after the first reading and complimented me highly after I gave him what he was envisioning. We did the same for the cut from "The Light in the Piazza," and, overall, I felt very good about my callback. Then came the stressful time of waiting for a cast list to come out, one of the most exciting but also nerve-wracking times for a performer.

Cast list and preparation for the semester

The cast list came out on August 7th, the day following callbacks. I spent that Saturday in Water Valley, Mississippi at a festival with my boyfriend and parents without any internet or data. Spotty internet had become a recurring theme for this entire audition process. I spent the morning before going to Water Valley anxiously refreshing my email waiting for an update. This was, of course, while I still had the internet. Maybe the loss of connection once we crossed over to Yalobusha County was a blessing in disguise, as it caused me to not obsess over my Gmail app.

Once my boyfriend and I started heading back to Lafayette my phone started buzzing with all the notifications I had not been getting before, including an email from Prof. Johnston with the cast list that had been sent two hours prior. Excitedly I opened it and there it was in black and white: Clara Johnson - Emma Johnson. I yelled with joy and immediately texted my parents, who I had just left. I couldn't believe I was getting an opportunity as big and exciting as this one.

The email read that all music and dialogue needed to be prepared to the best of our abilities before the first day of class. I immediately purchased the score when I got home on thrift books, as I like to save money when I can. I paid for express shipping so I could begin working on it right away. Unfortunately, when my package from thrift books arrived, it was not the vocal score but instead a small, bound copy of just the script. This taught me to always read the small, lettered descriptions before I hit buy. Nevertheless, I found the score for 50 dollars on Amazon and purchased it immediately, excited to get my hands on it.

My score came in on August 14th and I began working right away. I listened to the entire original Broadway cast recording while following the score and highlighting every line sung by Clara. The week before classes started, I spent every day in a practice room at the music department, playing through and learning a different song every day. I started with learning the rest of “The Light in the Piazza,” and Clara’s solo from the beginning of act one: “The Beauty Is,” which is musically one of the hardest pieces in the show. I wanted to be as prepared as possible for the first day of classes, even though musical coachings wouldn’t start until the second week of school. I was too excited to do much else than study Piazza music.

CHAPTER IV: Fall 2021 Rehearsal Process

August-September

Our first week of rehearsals was centered around getting to know Mr. Ewing as well as beginning to work on the study of our individual characters and Mr. Ewing's vision for the show itself. The show is set in 1950 Florence, Italy, which historically was a time of large political unrest due to World War Two. The economy was suffering, and Italy was in the process of building itself back up from the destruction following World War II. In addition to this, there was still a lot of focus on gender roles and social class in Italy. Mr. Ewing focused a lot on these aspects so we could be fully educated on the period we were trying to convey and be aware of the political and social climates of the time. One of the most important aspects in Italy for this time that directly influences Clara's character is Protestant vs. Catholicism. Most Italians in this period were Catholic, and Clara, coming from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was most likely Southern Baptist or something close to it. In the show, there is a scene where Clara converts to Catholicism, much to the dismay of her southern mother.

We did not officially start music coachings this week in normal Opera rehearsal time, but I went ahead and began coaching Piazza music with Prof. Johnston during my normal lesson coaching time. My first coaching for Piazza music was August 26th, 2021. I thought it fitting to begin with the title song of the show: "The Light in the Piazza," which I had sung a cut from for my callback. In this coaching we focused a lot on the movement of the lines, which is notated specifically by Guettel in the score. Instead of simply putting "rubato," there are arrows written above the musical systems to signify the ebb and flow of the phrases.

(N.B. Arrows indicate phrase direction)

forward ← slow down →

CLARA:

ten.

4 5 6

I don't see a mir-a-cle _ shin-ing from the sky.

ai or ai ai

p

Figure 5 Arrows indicated in score to show movement of phrase

The part of this piece that was most difficult for me, especially in the first coaching, was the meter changes in the song and keeping the subdivision especially in the second half as Clara's emotion builds and builds. We also worked a lot on English diction and keeping the diphthongs sounding the same and divided the same, specifically the diphthong ai which is in the word "light," and the diphthong εə, which is in the word "air." In musical theatre, there are R-colored vowels (ɜ, ə) that can be used to add r-coloring to a vowel without making a full r sound. We talked about adding those in but making sure to not have the r sound fully change the space and sound of the vowel. So, for example, the word air in IPA when singing it in musical theatre would be [εə], but if one was to sing this word in an art song it would only be [εə]. Like the same comments made to me when Zoe and I sang the opening scene last semester, Prof. Johnston also commented on making my lower notes more forward and having less space in the back of my throat for these notes, as opposed to the space I need to have when I sing higher

notes. The lower parts, especially the very beginning of the piece, need to have more of the same amount of space that I have when I speak.

The second week of rehearsals was spent on mostly music coachings and character study. On Tuesday August 31st, 2021, I coached Clara's overture, interlude, and "Light in the Piazza" again. The overture, which is the first thing sung in the entire show, has no words but is meant to signify Clara's astonishment and wonder exploring this entirely new world of Florence, Italy. The focus of the coaching for this short opening section was to find phrasing for the "ahs" that showcases Clara's feelings and creates the atmosphere for the entire show. I also had to work on keeping the ah forward the entire time, as when the bright [a] vowel falls back into my throat the pitch tends to waver as well.

Clara's interlude takes place in a moment of extreme emotional distress for her towards the end of act two. She has just overheard a telephone conversation between Margaret and Roy, Clara's dad, in which Roy makes very ableist comments about Clara and her ability to be married to Fabrizio and have a family. The interlude also has no words but is meant to showcase Clara's struggle of whether she should go through with the wedding. The interlude also ends with a musical quote borrowed from the end of Fabrizio's aria "Il Mondo Era Vuoto," adding to the emotional intensity. With this small section, we talked about finding freedom in the notes but also staying together with the orchestra rhythmically.

This coaching ended with revisiting "The Light in the Piazza" again. Since the last coaching, I had gone in and written in all my diphthongs, so these had improved

since then. I was still struggling with the subdivision in the second half of the piece and making sure all my entrances are motivated and on time with no hesitation.

We also had the opportunity to meet Mary Donnelly Haskell, who is playing Margaret, Clara's mother, in the production. Mrs. Haskell is an alumna of Ole Miss and an established actress in Los Angeles, so getting the opportunity to work with and learn from someone like her in such proximity is an amazing opportunity. Mrs. Haskell had already performed the role of Margaret Johnson before in Los Angeles with Mr. Ewing as Fabrizio, so that added another layer to it as well. On Wednesday September 1st, 2021, we coached the opening duet "Statues and Stories" which was very exciting. I was looking forward to feeling the differences between coaching this piece with Zoe last semester and coaching this piece now with Mary Haskell. Last semester we performed a cut version of the duet, but the song from the actual show is divided into two similar sections. We started with the first part and, since Mrs. Haskell is a contralto, we flipped a lot of voice parts so Clara would be singing the higher splits in the song, a slight difference from the last time I sang the duet. One comment that was made by Prof. Johnston was one of the same comments given to me last semester, which was to prepare my entrances earlier and make sure the air is spinning from the very first note in the phrase. We also worked on another aspect we discussed last semester which was somewhat "finishing each other's sentences" when we repeat the same musical lines right after one another and thinking about "cutting each other off" because of the excitement we both feel from being in this new environment.



Figure 6 Example of overlapping lines in “Statues and Stories”

The next day, September 2nd, I had the opportunity to do very detailed scene work with Mary Haskell and Blake Ewing. We read through the entire script and went in depth with the relationship between them in every scene. We really explored the arc of Clara’s maturity, from being impulsive and very child-like in the beginning of the show to gaining her independence from her mother towards the end of the musical. Margaret stresses multiple times throughout the show that Clara is a “special” child; what she means by this is revealed towards the end of act one after one of Clara’s breakdowns. When Clara was ten, she was kicked in the head by a Shetland pony, causing her mental and emotional capabilities to be stunted, which is disclosed by Margaret through one of her many asides throughout the show. Because of this, Margaret and Roy, Clara’s father, have been very protective of Clara and sheltered her throughout her entire life, perhaps to a fault. Margaret and Clara start the musical much more in sync and close to each other, but as Clara explores her freedom and the new emotionally intense feeling of falling in love, she drifts farther from her mother as she realizes how much she has been missing

due to her family's sheltering ways. Every time Margaret keeps Clara from doing what she wants regarding Fabrizio, their relationship becomes more and more strained which leads to the climax scene at the beginning of act one, the same scene I read with Mr. Ewing for my call back. After this scene and the song "The Light in the Piazza," Margaret realizes what she must do, which is let Clara go and gain her freedom by marrying the man she has fallen in love with.

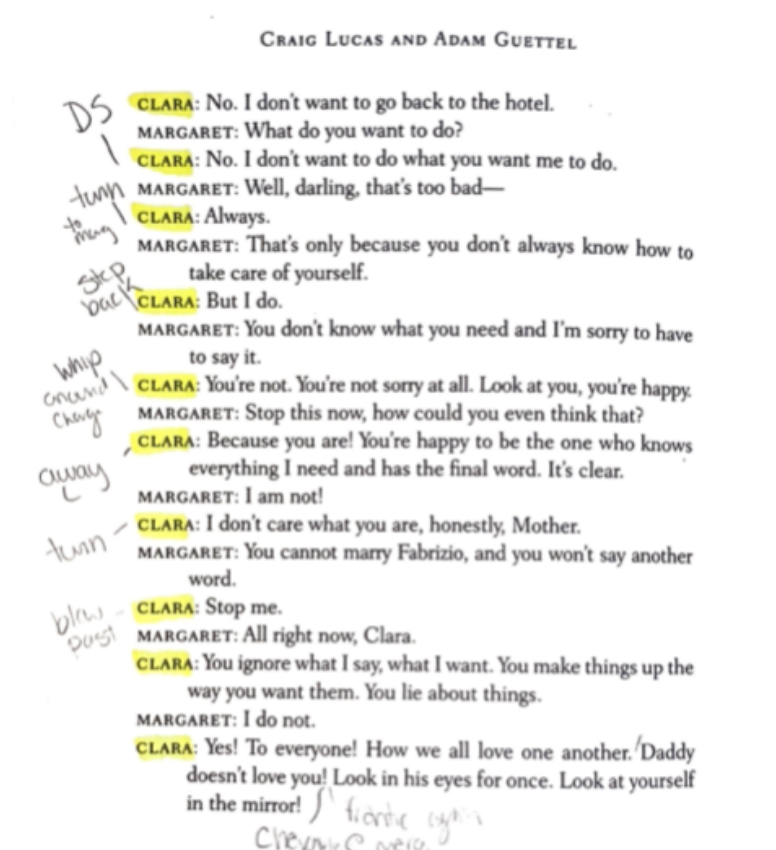


Figure 7 Dramatic scene with Margaret and Clara at the beginning of Act two

The next week was filled with more music coachings. On September 7th, I coached "Say it Somehow," with Isaiah Traylor, who was playing the role of Fabrizio. This song was one of the hardest songs for me to get in the show, due to the rhythm and

swing-like feeling that had to be maintained through the piece, in addition to the long “ah” section at the end, where Isaiah and I had to stay in perfect sync to showcase the connection between the two of them. This is what we focused mostly on in this coaching: the funky rhythm and just simply staying together with each other. Prof. Johnston told us to focus on staying “in between the beat” to help us feel the groove of the song. The most difficult part for me was realizing what parts needed to be swung and which parts needed to be “straight,” as it switches so many times throughout the duet. It also helped us both to divide the “Ah” section into different sections/gestures to differentiate them and help us stay together, in addition to breathing and getting off ending pitches at the same time. I had the most trouble throughout the entire rehearsal process with the rhythm at the very beginning of the duet, which is only sung by Clara. This would prove to be one of the most difficult musical lines for me in the whole show.

That same day I coached “The Beauty Is,” which is Clara’s other big solo besides “The Light in the Piazza.” This is my favorite song in the entire show that Clara sings, but it did prove to be, as Prof. Johnston had warned me, the hardest song musically for Clara. This song sits in the crack between high/low so it’s difficult to keep the vocal space vertical when it switches so often. The song is seemingly unsettled vocally to show the new and exciting world that Clara has entered in Italy, where she might seem a little uncomfortable but thrilled to be here. There are two sections that switch back and forth in this song: the choppy, short, and child-like section with the staccato accompaniment to the expressive and legato section where Clara is reflecting on what she’s always yearned for: something new. Another common theme and critique by Prof. Johnston that also relates to this song is going more into my mix voice, especially in the lower sections of

the piece. In the staccato section especially, I thought about singing more “speaky” and it almost always worked for me.

On September 8th, I was back with Isaiah to work on “Passeggiata”, which takes place in act one. The song is split into three parts and is mostly sung only by Fabrizio, but there is a cute moment shared by Fabrizio and Clara in the second part that showcases their language barrier more explicitly. Fabrizio is trying to tell Clara her “skin is like milk,” but cannot think of the English word for skin. Clara gets somewhat frustrated as she’s trying to help him figure out what exactly he means to say. The timing is tricky with this piece, mostly for Fabrizio more than Clara, but it still isn’t easy regarding Clara’s part. The trick to this section is to always think of it in one regarding musical meter, although Clara’s parts are much freer than Fabrizio’s. In addition to running this little “milk” section, we also went through one of the funkiest parts of the entire musical that takes place during Clara’s hysteria/lullaby that is at the end of act one. In this scene, Clara is trying to find her way to meet up with Fabrizio like she promised but gets lost in the streets of Italy. There is a “la la la” section that is very dissonant and sung by both Fabrizio & Clara. The section is very chaotic musically to signify Clara’s imminent mental breakdown as she tries to find her way. The musical score marks it as “spooky cheery,” and Prof. Johnston described it as “a bad carnival ride.” The trick is to not listen to the piano or other person’s part, in my case Fabrizio, and really focus on our independent lines.



Figure 8 Dissonant “La la” section from official score

On Thursday September 9th, we began staging with Mr. Ewing, which was very exciting. We started with Statues and Stories, which featured everyone in the cast. Since we were moving around now, we began to explore the push-pull of Clara with her mother, and how this tension grew to her running off and doing something on her own in Italy. For example, while Margaret’s head is in her Baedeker reading off facts, Clara runs over to an artist to try and get his attention. Clara, being an artist herself, is trying to draw the man sitting on the bench on her own sketchpad. It’s little things like this that are put into the staging that foreshadow what is going to happen later in the musical. The excitement and movement of the ensemble portraying all the characters in the Piazza made the scene feel so much more alive than it had when we performed it the previous semester. It was much easier to feed off the other’s energy, which made portraying

Clara's excitement about just being there much easier. I still had a straw hat and this time I managed to keep it on my head.



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Figure 9 Official Piazza Promo Poster

The following week, on Monday September 13th, we had our photoshoot for the promotional poster with Clara, Fabrizio, and Margaret. We went to the Ole Miss media center first to take individual pictures and then we went to the Phi Mu fountain in front of the library to take shots of us all together, as the fountain and a Blue Vespa helped evoke the feeling of picturesque Florence, Italy. Even Provost Noel Wilkin, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts Lee Cohen, and Department of Music Chair Nancy Maria Balach took part in the shoot. This was exciting, as the amount of financial assistance and support from university administration for this production exceeded anything that had been done prior in the UM Music department.



Figure 10 Photo in front of Phi Mu fountain with Blue Vespa

The next day, Tuesday September 14th, we went through one of the biggest numbers in the entire show which takes place in act two. It was the octet which occurs right before Fabrizio and Clara are to be married. There are three parts to this octet, with Clara's tirade being in the middle. In the first part, Clara is being converted to Catholicism by the priest which, of course, contains a lot of Latin. We started the coaching by speaking through the Latin text and talking about how the character of Clara would sound reciting Latin. She would most likely not know any Latin before this, so we discussed the pronunciation starting off rough and slowly getting better as the song goes on, which is shown through Clara rattling off the Latin before her tirade. Also shown through how quickly she picks up Italian words from being in Florence, Clara is much smarter than she seems when it comes to learning new things, evident in how quickly she picks up the Latin pronunciations. While Clara and the priest are saying Latin phrases,

the other characters are singing a dreamy, romantic melody line. The Latin is intertwined into the musical lines sung by Franca, Margaret, etc. Some of these entrances are tricky to get rhythmic wise, especially with the random 5/4 bars that are thrown into the mix. The second part of Octet contains very legato, dream-like Ahs and the same melody line from Octet one, just minus the inner dispersed Latin. This creates the romantic and church-like atmosphere for Fabrizio and Clara's wedding and is sung by the entire cast.

On September 15th, I coached many different things with Prof. Johnston, starting with Clara's Tirade, which takes place in the middle of Octet part one and two and disrupts the dreamy vibes created by the rest of the cast. This song is exactly what the title describes, a sort of temper tantrum thrown by Clara because she has just watched Franca, Fabrizio's sister-in-law, kiss Fabrizio to prove a point to her husband Giuseppe, Fabrizio's brother. Clara, being not very good at expressing her emotions in a healthy, communicative way, reverts to causing a scene and yelling at everyone around her. Half of this song is truly sung, while the other half is somewhat yelled in a healthy way. The most difficult part of this song for me is the very wide range and switching between the high and the low, a common theme throughout many of Clara's pieces for me. Also, it's difficult, for me, to keep the anger out of the voice, which would create an unhealthy and tense sound. The craziness of the melody line and the chordal, stomping-like accompaniment creates the atmosphere of anger. I must really focus on staying supported throughout this piece especially, since Clara is so unhinged. We also focused a lot on word stress and where the phrase is headed to add more depth to the tantrum.

Towards the end of this coaching session, we went back over Clara's overture. With the overture, we worked more on the entrance and coming in with no hesitation,

since the note is hard to find with the accompaniment. I tend to go more towards the higher notes, since that is more of my happy place, but this leaves the lower notes to be slightly under pitch. Prof. Johnston gave me the advice to enjoy every note and make sure every note matters but give different colors to the notes to add variety.

This same day, I coached *Hysteria/Lullaby* with Isaiah and Mrs. Haskell. This time we focused on the entire song, not just the “creepy carnival” la la la section towards the end. This is Clara’s other major breakdown in the show, as she has snuck out of her hotel room away from her mother to try and find Fabrizio, but she has gotten lost along the way. She meets many interesting and somewhat creepy people walking in Italy as she’s running around, and this causes her to spiral even more. This is another piece where it’s very important to stay supported throughout as Clara loses her mind. There is a lot of dialogue interspersed throughout the singing lines, so a lot of the concentration for this piece is timing between the dialogue and the accompaniment. There are a lot of weird chromatic leaps in this piece that you wouldn’t expect, so Prof. Johnston gave me the advice to really lean into the interesting notes that you wouldn’t expect to be there. The song ends with Margaret singing the lullaby she always sings to Clara to help her calm down after she’s found her on the streets of Florence.

The last day of this week, September 16th, we staged another one of the big group scenes with Mr. Ewing, which was Act one Scene six, or the “Tea scene.” This scene is the first time Margaret and Clara meet the rest of Fabrizio’s family, the Nacarelli’s. Clara quickly goes off with Franca, Fabrizio’s sister-in-law, while Margaret and Signor Nacarelli have a somewhat tense conversation over tea with Signor frequently cutting Margaret off. Margaret is trying to disclose Clara’s “situation,” as she calls it, to them but

she can't seem to get many words in. In the other room, Franca is singing her solo "The Joy you feel" to Clara, which showcases Franca's feelings towards relationships and love which has been soured by the constant infidelity of Giuseppe, her husband and Fabrizio's brother. This whole situation is too much for Clara and makes her very confused, causing her to run out of the room and back into the Tea room to Fabrizio, begging him to help calm her down. This is upsetting to Margaret, as she is normally the one Clara runs to in instances like this, but now she is going to Fabrizio instead. This scene contains many little details that add to the overall story, and we worked on showcasing these today with Mr. Ewing.

I had another staging rehearsal on Monday, September 20th with Mr. Ewing. We staged both "Passeggiata" and "The Beauty is." "Passeggiata," which means a leisurely walk or stroll in Italian, is meant to serve as Fabrizio and Clara's first "date" in act one. Fabrizio is walking around with Clara pointing out all the sites that are special to him, so the staging consisted of a lot of me following Isaiah and being thoroughly enthralled with everything he said to me. The scene is sweet and wholesome, ending with us spinning around together in a circle holding hands and him lifting me up onto a bench. It's meant to symbolize and foreshadow a future for them together in Italy. In regard to "The Beauty is," the song takes place in an art museum, which is of course very interesting to Clara with her being an artist herself. The song starts with one of my favorite moments in the entire show. Before singing the opening line: "These are very popular in Italy," Clara approaches one of the marble statues and examines its genitalia, touching it with her hand. It is not meant to be sexual but showcase her child-like wonder for seeing something like that in the middle of a museum. There are many moments in this song

where she references the paintings projected behind her. For example, when she sings: “Everyone’s a mother here in Italy,” Clara references the “Madonna with Angels” painting and puts her hands together in a prayer pose, mimicking the painting.



Figure 11 “Madonna with Angels” that Clara mimics in “The Beauty is”

As her wonder and yearning grows, she moves farther downstage and opens her arms, symbolizing her opening to new experiences and feelings, hopefully regarding Fabrizio, as this song takes place very soon after they meet for the first time.

Tuesday September 21st, we staged “Say it Somehow” and “Clara’s Interlude.” “Say it Somehow” takes place at the end of act one and is the passionate and expressive duet with Fabrizio and Clara. Clara has just fallen asleep in her bed before Fabrizio arrives at her hotel room, expressing confusion and hurt over her not meeting him like they had promised. Little does he know that she tried to meet up with him but got lost

along the way. Fabrizio begins to second guess her feelings for him and how they might have a relationship with the obvious language barrier that is present. Clara tries to convince him at the beginning of the duet and as they both continue to sing, they get closer and closer, physically, and emotionally, as the hesitation slips away. By the “Ahs” at the end of the duet, they are completely in sync with each other and trusting of the others’ emotions. The “Ahs” are meant to symbolize them transcending the language barrier and communicating despite it. The blocking takes place almost entirely on the bed, with Clara inviting Fabrizio to her by giving him a pillow and yanking it away, forcing him to be close to her. The duet ends with a passionate kiss and Margaret coming in at the last minute, catching them, leading to a blackout and the end of act one.

Clara’s interlude is a quick scene that takes place after Clara overhears the ableist phone conversation between her mother and father. Before she sings, there is a long orchestral prelude where she runs right in front of the projection screen. Depending on the lighting, this is meant to look like the picture on the cover of the vocal score, with Clara’s shadow being bathed in light.

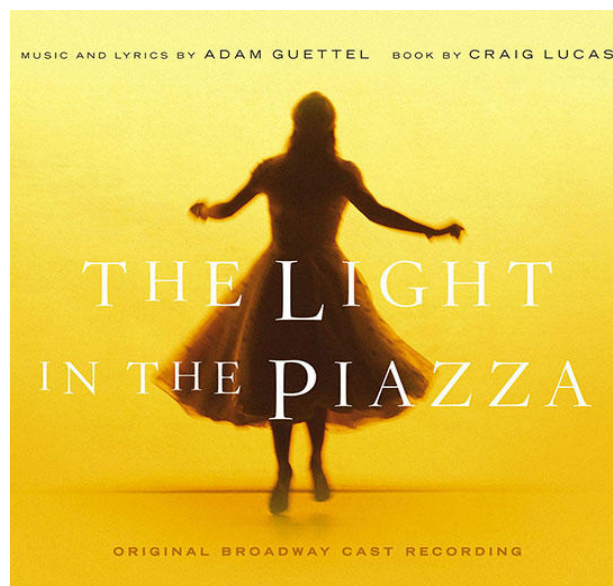


Figure 12 Cover of both the Original Broadway Cast recording and Vocal score

The blocking mostly consists of Clara running back and forth in emotional distress and she ends the line where she mimics Fabrizio's aria: "Ah, Luce!" collapsed at the edge of the stage. She must now make the ultimate decision of if she will go through with this wedding or not, as it might not be the best decision for everyone,

With regards to music, at this point everything had been coached at least once with Prof. Johnston, so we began review sessions intertwined with blocking rehearsals. On Wednesday, September 22nd I coached "Statues and Stories" for the second time with Mrs. Haskell, which went very well. I continued to focus on keeping my "mixy/speaky" feel, which me and Prof. Johnston had talked about a lot up to this point and preparing my entrances well when I would come in after a long rest while Margaret sang. After we ran through the song, we went with Mr. Ewing to review the blocking we had done two weeks prior.

On September 23rd, Isaiah and I reviewed music for "Passeggiatta" and "Say it somehow" with Prof. Johnston. We continued to work on the timing of the entire "milk" section we had hammered before, as it really is particularly tricky for Fabrizio's part. In regard to the duet "Say it Somehow," I focused on the opening line that I still continue to have trouble with rhythmically. Both me and Isaiah were together, even making the same mistakes at the same time, which normally just consisted of not being as rhythmically precise as we could be. It just continues to come down to which sections are "swung" and which sections are "straight." In a perfect world, we'd both get where these sections are

right, but if both me and Isaiah do the same thing, no one in the audience would be able to tell that anything is wrong.

The last week of September was spent going over music and preparing for our staging intensives that were to take place the first weekend of October, which we were all supposed to be entirely off-book for. On Monday, September 27th I coached “Hysteria/Lullaby” again with Isaiah, trying to focus on keeping the focused, mixy tone while maintaining a raised palate and staying in tune. I’ve realized as I’ve been coaching and consistently hearing this critique how hard it is to balance, but it’s just something I need to continue to work on. If I always think of verticality while thinking of the mixy tone, I’ll stay in tune while being in the specific vocal style I’m going for.

The following day I went through “The Beauty is” and “The Light in the Piazza” one last time one on one with Prof. Johnston. We started with “The Beauty is” and worked on little rhythms and tempo changes that I still struggled with, especially setting up the *rallentando* at the very end of the song. I also continued to work on matching my vocal quality to the two different sections of the song. With “The Light in the Piazza” Prof. Johnston told me to focus more on the endings of words, as they were getting lost. I also still tend to change the diphthong on “light,” instead of keeping the vowels pure. We also worked on the tempo changes and setting them up correctly with this piece as well.

On Wednesday, September 29th, we had another group music coaching over Octet (Parts one and two), Church, and Clara’s Tirade. This was the first time we were putting Clara’s part with the Priest’s part as he was in quarantine the first time we coached this number. We focused on keeping a chant-like feel to the Latin and making sure the vowel was the core of the sound. This was my first time going straight from the

long lines of Latin straight into the tirade, which is one of the hardest parts of the show for me. We changed a lot of the interjections like “Hey!” and “No!” to just be spoken/yelled instead of on the written pitch, which was helpful. I still needed to focus more on keeping the forwardness/nastiness of the tone since Clara is simply losing her mind in this scene and isn’t fully aware of what she’s doing/saying.

The last rehearsal of the month of September was a blocking rehearsal with Mr. Ewing for the entire octet number, as well as hysteria. Octet opens with only me and the priest, CJ, coming on down left as Clara focuses on her conversion to Catholicism. Upstage, the Nacarelli’s are getting prepared for the upcoming wedding rehearsal. Clara stays primarily downstage with her head in her catechism until she begins to ramble off her Latin, walking upstage to see Franca kissing Fabrizio as an act of defiance against Giuseppe. This sends Clara into a manic state, as she tears through the apartment, pushing people and throwing anything she can find. Clara ends her tirade by throwing a glass of wine on Franca, before realizing what she has done. She apologizes immediately and the whole family makes up and moves on before heading to the wedding rehearsal at the church, which takes place while Octet Part two is sung.

Hysteria is one of the trickier numbers we blocked, as there are a lot of choreographed movements and less that is left up to interpretation. Clara enters up right walking in a circle as she tries to find her way through the streets of Italy. Most notably, she turns right when she sings “turning left,” to signify her confusion and how she is soon to be lost. She has a note which Fabrizio wrote her but, in a moment of overconfidence, she crumbles it up and throws it down. When she realizes she’s forgotten the instructions, she goes to pick it up, but a strange man has already picked it up off the ground. While

she is running through the streets, trying to find her way she comes across a creepy older man and a prostitute, who are little to no help to her. During the creepy “La la la” section that we worked on so adamantly in music coachings, Clara walks in a clockwise circle, while the Italians she’s met throughout the scene (creepy man, prostitute, etc.) circle her counterclockwise to signify her slowly having a breakdown. She pushes through the circle and screams both for Fabrizio and the only thing she has memorized to help ground herself: “Clara Johnson 142 East Lake Street.” She screams her Winston-Salem address three times before collapsing on the edge of the stage while her mother breaks through the crowd of onlookers to come and comfort her, bringing her back to the hotel whilst singing her lullaby.

Renée Fleming Master class

One of my favorite aspects of the UM Music Department is the number of exciting opportunities that are presented to us. Getting to be a part of a masterclass with the world-renowned soprano Renée Fleming was another amazing experience that I had during my fall semester senior year. Fleming was originally planning to visit Ole Miss fall of 2020 but, due to the pandemic, was not able to come until fall of 2021. This was beneficial for me as we had many more sopranos in our department at that time, making my chances of being chosen for the masterclass much slimmer. But, thanks to the pandemic, (how many times do you hear that phrase non-sarcastically?) I was selected alongside Isaiah Traylor (Fabrizio) and Katie Hovan (Signora Naccarelli). The Renée Fleming masterclass was not directly linked to our production of *The Light in the Piazza*, although Fleming had recently appeared as Margaret Johnson in multiple productions in

2019, the experience of performing for and being coached by someone as established as Fleming brought me many tools that would later assist me in my Piazza performance.

The masterclass took place on Tuesday, September 21st at 11 am in the Ford Center. Because I am fully vaccinated, I was able to sing without a mask on. This was my first-time performing mask-less and on a stage as big as the Ford center since before the pandemic, which was a hurdle. I sang “Mein Herr Marquis” (Adele’s laughing song) from Die Fledermaus, the same aria I had used for my Piazza audition. Although I’ve been on stage for almost my entire life, this was the most nervous I had ever been for a performance. Masterclasses add additional stressors than just performing your piece well, as you must be prepared for any questions that might be thrown your way about the character or the music itself. Before this, I had only had the chance to be a participant in one other masterclass, which was only ten minutes due to time constraints, over zoom, and I did not even get a chance to perform my entire piece, so it’s hard to really count it. Masterclasses had always scared me, so what better way to get accustomed to them than being thrown headfirst into a masterclass with Mrs. Fleming.

As I stated before, I was a nervous wreck. I had only sung “Mein Herr Marquis” over zoom and for video auditions up to this point, and never sung the song live. I had also learned this piece over zoom voice lessons and coachings my junior year, which made me develop many bad habits with the piece that are still hard for me to break. My nerves got the best of me to some extent, not giving as great of a performance as I believed I could have with my preparation level, but, given the circumstances, I felt okay about it overall. Right after I sang Mrs. Fleming did call my performance cute and told me the piece was perfect for me, so that’s a positive. She immediately critiqued my

German diction, saying that it “wasn’t terrible but needed work,” which is something I already knew, especially given the habits I still had a hard time letting go of.

We talked a lot about support, which is the first thing to go for me when my nerves act up as much as they did. She talked to me about balanced breathing and trying to “enable my body to have an equilibrium as I take in a breath,” which makes your voice feel like you’re singing on a cushion, as she described it. When you breathe you want to feel the expansion all along your torso in addition to releasing the abdominal wall and back muscles, which creates a sort of “barrel effect.” Once you’ve created this expansion and support, you don’t collapse it quickly, which is something I did when I performed for her. She had me sing the first phrase again slower, focusing on my ribcage expansion and not collapsing my chest. I then took a pencil and put it in between my teeth and sang the phrase on an “e” vowel, focusing on a “laser” sound as she described it. This forced my sound to be more focused and forward, while staying connected to my breath. We worked mostly on this, as well as finding more mouth resonance in my sound and more projection/energy in my middle voice. Mrs. Fleming did call my head voice very pretty, but she wanted to work a little on the ending of this aria, which consists of staccato runs and a high C meant to mimic laughter, hence the name of it being “Adele’s laughing song.” We focused on not collapsing once again on the staccato, and we did the straw exercise which also helps with breath expansion. You must work much harder to take in air when you breathe through a straw, making you much more aware of what is happening. Taking in the air through a straw and then singing the phrase fixed every issue I was having before, giving me a far more present sound. I still have the straw she gave

me in my vocal lesson binder as a reminder to always support and expand, no matter how bad my nerves seem.



Figure 13 The Master Class Participants & Prof. Johnston with Mrs. Fleming

October

In regard to *The Light in the Piazza* rehearsals, October was dedicated to staging the entire show and cleaning up anything that needed polishing. We started the month with our staging intensive October 2nd and October 3rd, which were full days of blocking everything that had not been blocked up to this point. As I stated before, we were expected to be off book by October 2nd, which ended up going much more smoothly than I expected. The days of this weekend were long but very productive, and it felt good to have the entire show staged, lines memorized, and all music learned more than a month away from opening night.

The week of October 4th-7th was spent working through acts and focusing on what needed to be cleaned up. Our weekend blocking rehearsals did not include Prof. Johnston, so our Wednesday and Thursday rehearsals added the aspect of live piano. The pandemic has made me very averse to singing with tracks, so I'm always grateful for a live accompaniment as opposed to singing along with a track, as it tends to make me lose my musicality and follow the track instead of leading the piano. This is an example of a little thing from performing amidst a pandemic that made a lot bigger difference than I thought it would.



Figure 14 October 7th Rehearsal of Clara shouting “Olly Olly Oxen Free!”*

On October 11th we cleaned up specific scenes with Mr. Ewing, including all the scenes with Fabrizio, Clara, and Margaret. There are three scenes that take place at the beginning of act one that include Margaret and Clara being together and Fabrizio coming out of nowhere to talk to Clara. All three scenes are very similar, and all three of us

tended to mix them up due to their similarities. We worked on solidifying these three scenes and distinguishing between them. Isaiah and I also worked on the blocking once again for “Passeggiata,” “Say it Somehow,” and “Love to me,” which is Fabrizio’s last solo at the end of act two. He sings “Love to me” directly after “Clara’s Interlude,” to remind her of the love they hold for each other and how she deserves to be happy, which means going through with the wedding. The blocking is simple to emphasize the romantic lyrics and the depth of their feelings. Isaiah and I have been friends since my freshman year, so we naturally have a familiar connection with each other, making it easier to act with each other.



Figure 15 Mrs. Haskell and I receive direction from Mr. Ewing*

On Tuesday, October 12th we reviewed the Tea Scene and Octet with only the leads before we added the ensemble the following day and on Thursday, we did both of these scenes with everyone in addition to “Hysteria”, “Statues & Stories”, and the “Wedding/Fable”, which is the last scene in the entire show. “Fable” is Margaret’s last

solo in the show which comments on both her and Clara's future and the love she holds for her daughter. The blocking for it contains everyone on stage as they attend Clara & Fabrizio's wedding. Thursday, October 15th was the first day of the entire rehearsal process that I was not called. As much as I love this show, it's always nice to have an afternoon off.

The following week continued to consist of my scenes with Isaiah, working only with Mr. Ewing on Monday and adding Prof. Johnston on Tuesday. Now that we both have our blocking and music solidified well, we just needed to work on showcasing the intensity of this relationship and the connection between the two of us. Despite the differences between the two, Clara and Fabrizio are not very different in regard to character traits. Clara is a 26-year-old girl who has never felt anything quite like love due to her sheltered upbringing and cognitive disability while Fabrizio is a 22-year-old, slightly immature boy who has just never fallen in love. They might have an obvious language barrier, but they can still communicate and connect with each other on a deeper level. Isaiah and I are still working to find the perfect balance of this. I think it will also help when we don't have to wear masks to every rehearsal anymore.

The next couple rehearsals focused on technical aspects of the show that are just as important as artistic elements. Wednesday, October 20th was our cue to cue of the entire show, which is a run through from one technical cue to the next. This allows the tech crew and director to go over which cue needs to happen when to allow for a smoother upcoming tech rehearsal. This rehearsal was also important for the ensemble members that move set pieces. We did not employ the use of any stagehands for our show, with every set change being done by the members of the ensemble. Mr. Ewing did

this to really create the atmosphere and feeling of the show taking place in Florence, Italy and every ensemble member being included in telling this story. Monday and Tuesday of the following week focused on costumes and hair/makeup. Clara has many different costume changes in this show, so we created a costume plot to keep all of the changes straight. I had five different costumes in act one, and three costumes in act two. Clara's hair and makeup is also very straightforward and 50s inspired. My hair was to be curled and half-up/half-down with my straight across bangs I had at the time.



Figure 16 Receiving my costume plot for the show*

CHAPTER V: Adam Guettel Residency

We had known from the beginning of the process that Adam Guettel, the composer, and lyricist of *The Light in the Piazza* would be coming on campus November 3rd through November 5th. This, of course, was unbelievably nerve wracking as I have never had the opportunity to perform a work for the actual composer. Guettel arrived in Oxford on Tuesday, November 2nd and I first was able to meet and work with him on Wednesday, November 3rd. He came to our rehearsal and at this rehearsal we worked on the opening scene with Clara and Margaret arriving in Florence, the passionate duet that ends act two between Clara and Fabrizio, and Margaret's solo in act one: "Dividing Day." As stated before, I was incredibly nervous to perform for Guettel, but I received very valuable feedback and insight from him that I wouldn't have received from anyone other than the composer himself. For the overture and opening duet of "Statues and Stories," Guettel told me to focus on the brightness of my tone and to really revel in the wonder that Clara is feeling. He focused heavily on diction. For "Say it somehow" Guettel worked with both Isaiah and I's levels of passion and emotion throughout the piece. He talked to us a lot about feeling the "swing" in the music, which we had worked on previously with Prof. Johnston. He also talked to us about how he wrote the duet and how it was meant to have more of a pop music type feel rather than a classical feel. He worked with us on straight toning parts of the song to add more depth and feeling to certain lines.

On November 4th, Guettel worked with us during our normal rehearsal time again. He worked with us first on the Octet, particularly Octet part two that contains the romantic, dream-like melody line I've mentioned before. He focused a lot on the diction

and ends of words to really understand every syllable, in addition to all the tempo changes that tended to trip us up and make us fall behind. After we finished that, Guettel worked with me on both the staging and music for “The Beauty is.” He talked to me a lot about the breakdown of the song and how the staccato intro symbolizes me being childlike. As the song goes on and Clara looks at the pictures in the museum, she begins to question things, leading into the more legato section of the piece. Despite the pictures being so “old,” they’re symbolizing how she feels at this current moment, making her feel connected to them. There’s a moment in the song where Clara shouts out “Hello!” but no one’s there. Guettel told me to say it as if I’m saying hello to the paintings and I recognize myself in the pictures. This is the first time Clara’s ever been away from her mother, even if it’s only for a small time. The middle and freer section symbolizes the beginning of her independence and growing up as she really thinks about what’s happening around her. Clara doesn’t feel so alone as she looks at the paintings. Guettel described the song as a “microcosm” of the whole show” as we watch Clara become a woman right before our eyes through the difference of sound between the two sections. He also called the beginning genital touch of the statue the “doink” which is all I thought about every time I went through the scene after this. After he worked with me on this, he worked with Isaiah on his aria “Il Mondo Era Vuoto” in the same way.

The next morning was my favorite instance with Guettel: my private coaching with him. We started with the title song, and he talked to me a lot about the compression/release in the beginning phrases that I had worked on during my first coaching session with Prof. Johnston on this piece. He really hammered the concept of keeping the line moving and not separating the phrases too much. Guettel described the

song as a “manifesto for Clara,” as Clara truly realizes who she is and how she is her own person. Clara is proclaiming how she feels to the universe, not caring if her mother is listening or not. He repeated multiple times that the song wasn’t only meant to be pretty and sound pretty but meant to be Clara finally speaking her mind which translated to me having much crisper diction than I had before. He had me try doing specific phrases without any vibrato to create more of an intimate sound, which was somewhat difficult for me. The last word in the song is Clara saying “Fabrizio,” and Guettel told me to really take a big break before I speak his name, as if the word is sacred to me. Through this coaching, he helped me add shape and urgency to the piece, centered around the compression/release, to give it more of the “manifesto” feeling he spoke about before.

We completely switched gears and moved to “Clara’s Tirade” because Guettel wanted to work on a healthy belt with this piece. He related the piece to the beginning of “The Beauty is,” with the staccato, stride-like feeling and the need to find the childishness of this outburst. I used to play a lot more belty roles in high school, but I really haven’t belted much in public since then, as most pieces I sing now don’t need it. It was fun to belt again, but a little nerve wracking since I hadn’t done it in so long. Guettel had me focus less on the beauty of the sound and more on channeling the anger that Clara is feeling at this moment. He had me just yell the words at him, as if I was mad at him before putting the text to the notes. He then had me sing the lines only on vowels to help bring attention to the words. We went through each phrase and decided when I needed to belt and when I needed to sing in my head voice, as a belt gives a different timbre and color to a phrase. After I yelled a lot, we moved to “Clara’s Interlude,” which Guettel described as the “prettiest music in the show.” He likened it to the title song, with the

tenuto marking on the first note and then moving through the phrase to give the sense of it being unstoppable.

At the end of the session, we went through “Say it Somehow” together. We worked on keeping the phrases smooth and continuous while focusing on getting the quadruplets right. He explained that he used the quadruplets to emphasize Clara’s desire and need to get to Fabrizio. My favorite part of this whole session was Guettel singing Fabrizio’s part. How many people can say they sang a duet with the composer of the piece? We talked more about the “compression/release” of this piece, which I previously described as the “swing/straight” feel. We also continued to add straight tone to different phrases, as Guettel commented that he believes my vibrato is getting in the way of my “Claraness” and aging me a bit. Before Guettel left Oxford, I asked him to sign my score and I couldn’t stop smiling after I read what he wrote.

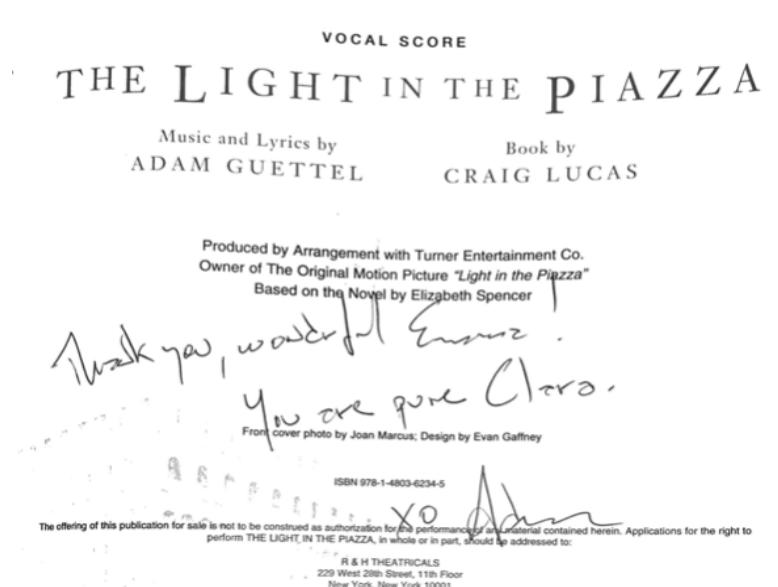


Figure 17 Adam Guettel’s message and signature in my score

CHAPTER VI: *The Light in the Piazza* in the Gertrude C. Ford Center Masked to Maskless

I had gotten used to singing with a mask throughout this entire process. The element that kept me staying positive about the situation was knowing that we would be able to take the masks off for tech week and the show as long as we were vaccinated. I am not anti-mask by any means, but it really does feel miserable to sing in a mask. I have found, through a lot of trial and error, that my “favorite” masks to sing in are black surgical masks, which is what our choir used for all our masked concerts. I am using favorite as a loose term because it still doesn’t feel great, but they’re better than cloth masks or N95’s in my opinion.



Figure 18 Socially Distanced & masked at a rehearsal intensive*

I attribute singing in a mask as one of the reasons I began to lose my love for singing, as it just isn’t as fulfilling. Every time I breathed in, I had to worry about my mask getting stuck in my mouth. My diction suffered, as the extra layer over my face made it ten times harder to really understand my foreign languages. I picked up a lot of

bad habits when it came to my mouth and tongue, as Prof. Johnston couldn't see my mouth to correct what I was doing wrong. Bringing my tongue forward to really "spit" out words made me feel like I was close to touching my mask with my tongue, which is not a good feeling. I also picked up an old habit of holding tension in my jaw, as I would do that to try and keep the mask from sliding down my face when I sang. Above all else, my voice just didn't sound the same to me. It always sounded "contained" behind the fabric and not as good as I knew it could sound. Singing in a mask really messed with my confidence in my voice, which is why I was looking forward to taking it off my face. Despite all of this, I did find that singing in a mask gave me a better ability to communicate a performance through my eyes, since that was all anyone could see.

Although eye communication got better, it's still much easier to play off your scene mates when you can see your whole face. The connection between Isaiah that we had been working on so much in rehearsal seemed much easier now without the masks. Not to mention we no longer had to kiss with masks in between us. It really felt freeing for me to be able to sing on the Ford center stage with no restrictions covering my mouth and nose. For the first time in a long time, I felt good about the way I sounded, and I felt free to really enjoy my performance. I had worked so hard for this and gone through a lot emotionally to get to this moment. I wanted to savor it to the best of my ability, without having to reach up and pull my mask back up over my nose.

Sitzprobe

Before we got to the Ford center, we had another exciting rehearsal, or at least I had been looking forward to it myself: the Sitzprobe. The Sitzprobe is a rehearsal focused

on the music that brings the orchestra and singers together for the first time. The orchestra for this production is small: with only piano, harp, double bass, cello, and violin. Prof. Johnston was the conductor, and our rehearsal took place in the choir room. While we couldn't be mask less the entire time, we were allowed to pull down our masks when we were singing solo. It was magical getting to finally hear this music with our orchestra all together. Prof. Johnston's goal was to sing through Act one without stopping and then take a small break before proceeding to Act two. We had the choir room for four hours, but we didn't use the entire time. This was the first sitzprobe I had ever experienced being a lead and singing almost the entire time. There's just something about singing with the orchestra that made everything feel real, like the show was finally coming together. This wasn't all a dream; we were really doing this show. I left this rehearsal feeling rejuvenated and more excited than ever for the upcoming final rehearsals and the show in two weeks.

Tech week

Sunday, November 14th was our first day in the Ford center. It was a cue to cue, but this time with the entire tech crew there in the actual performance venue. Even though it was a rehearsal primarily for the tech crew, we still worked through our music and blocking as normal. It was a little nerve wracking being on the Ford Center stage again after some time and being mask less added to the vulnerability I felt. I didn't perform the best I knew I could have but it was only a tech rehearsal, so perfection was not needed. Prof. Johnston sent out notes the next day, with me getting a laundry list worth of them. Some of them included falling behind with the orchestra in "Say it

somehow” and not being true to the score even though Isaiah and I were together, diction problems with the overture and “The Light in the Piazza,” and a couple early entries in different songs. Instead of letting the fact that I got the most notes discourage me, it made me strive to work harder. Now that I had the first technical run through under my belt, every single one would get better after that.



Figure 19 Receiving notes from Mr. Ewing after a Dress rehearsal*

On Monday and Tuesday, we did more runs with only the piano. Both were semi train wrecks, with different things going wrong each show. They always say a bad dress rehearsal means a great show, and in my experience of doing shows this really is usually the case. As we continued to add more technical elements, things going wrong was to be expected. I received far fewer musical notes after Tuesday’s run, which was a positive. Some of my things to work on for Wednesday’s dress rehearsal were making sure to

watch Prof. Johnston for every entry so I'm neither early nor late, and making sure my long Latin phrase in Octet crescendos so it can be heard.

Wednesday was my best dress rehearsal. I felt so good after I got off stage, feeling able to perform the show right at that moment. All the musical notes I received were positive feedback with nothing to correct. I ended the night with a tickle in my throat, not thinking much of it, but I woke up sick on Thursday.

Thursday, November 18th, was our last dress rehearsal before opening night and I woke up without a voice. Instead of immediately going into panic mode, which was what I wanted to do, I just drank lemon honey tea religiously and went on vocal rest, praying for a miracle. I couldn't believe the event I'd been working towards the entire semester was the next day and I had gotten sick. Couldn't this cold have waited until next week? Nevertheless, there was nothing I could do now except take care of myself and talk as little as possible, which anyone who knows me knows is a very difficult task. Thursday's rehearsal was unbelievably rough. It has never hurt that much for me to sing, and I could barely speak my lines. I wanted to just burst into tears on stage. I let the tears fall once we reached the emotional climax in act two, as they made sense in that moment. After the rehearsal, Prof. Johnston assured me I didn't sound as bad as it felt to me, but I needed to stay home all-day Friday and rest if I wanted to be better for opening night. I took a COVID test, and it was negative, so at least it wasn't the virus that had gotten me.

November 19th and 21st

Friday came and I did not feel any better. I had a full breakdown at home with my boyfriend, telling him I didn't think I was going to be able to do this and that broke my

heart. But just like they say on Broadway, I told myself “The show must go on “. I didn’t have an understudy, so somehow, I had to make this happen. I stayed home and did not speak until I got to the Ford center so I could begin warming up my voice, but everything still hurt. I was incredibly nervous for how my voice would sound once I got on stage. All I could do was suck on my cough drops, drink my tea, and pray for a miracle to strike so I could sing this musically difficult part and feel good about my performance.



Figure 20 Singing “The Beauty is” during Friday night’s performance*

Intermission came and I could not believe how good it was going. It would have gone better if my health was 100% but, given my current circumstances, I couldn’t have asked for more. I trusted my training and breath support and it was pulling me through this performance. By the end of the show, I felt like I was on cloud nine. I had done it and

I had done so well. I couldn't have been prouder of myself. When I walked out into the lobby and was greeted by and cheered for by all my family and friends, I just wanted to cry happy tears. My boyfriend pulled me into a hug and kissed me, telling me he knew I could pull it off. I don't think I could have done it without the support of all my family and friends. Sunday's performance went ten times better, as I stayed home and rested even more all-day Saturday. The only downside was I was pretty sure I had gotten Isaiah sick, so now he was struggling the way I struggled Friday, although he pulled through and still sounded incredible.

I couldn't believe the show was over after only two performances. All those coachings and rehearsals and now it was over. I was, and still am, so thankful for the work and dedication of the entire cast and crew, especially Mr. Ewing and Prof. Johnston. This show was an absolute dream for me and I'm certain this isn't the last I'll be seeing of Clara Johnson. This isn't a goodbye Clara, it's only a see you later.



Figure 21 Me and my family after Friday night's performance*

CHAPTER VII: Senior Recital

To not let go of Clara so soon, I put “The Light in the Piazza” as the last piece in my senior recital. I didn’t really have much time to work on it the semester of my recital, as I had a large number of other pieces I needed to learn, and I had worked on the piece so extensively the semester before. I only really got the chance to coach it with Prof. Johnston one time the week before my recital. The piece was still solid, besides some simple mistakes that I fixed after she reminded me.



Figure 22 Singing “The Light in the Piazza” at my senior recital

Since I ended the recital with the piece, I had been singing for 50 minutes before I got to the song, so I was vocally fatigued and highly emotional. This was it; my undergraduate vocal career was coming to an end. I didn’t only plan to sing “The Light in

the Piazza” at the end of the recital because it was a pretty song that I already knew and sang well, but because it symbolized the production and experience that brought my love for music back to me. Everyone else in the audience didn’t know how much it meant to me, but I knew. Which is why it was taking everything in me to keep it together and not start crying on stage. Somehow, I made it through the song, although I was told many people in the audience were crying, mostly my parents and my fellow Piazza castmates. It was the perfect way to end my recital and vocal journey at the University of Mississippi.

CHAPTER VIII: Reflection

This experience and show really was a true blessing for me. The pandemic left me feeling extremely burned out and almost ready to give up performing all together, but this production brought the light of music and theatre back to my life. Of course, I would have preferred to go through this show and rehearsal process without COVID-19, but the challenges of working through the pandemic is what made this experience so much more important to me. How many universities had the capabilities to put on a show of this magnitude during the pandemic?

I learned a lot during this entire experience, but I believe the most important aspect that stuck with me was the power of resilience and perseverance. I've never been the type of person to give up easily, but the circumstances I was under due to the pandemic pushed my limits. But if it wasn't for my determination and the support of my family and peers, I would not have had an experience such as this one. If I had given up while I was playing my paper piano, I would never have gotten to know Clara to the extent that I did. I really do believe Clara Johnson saved me. The feeling of singing "The Light in the Piazza" alone, mask less, to a theatre filled with people was a feeling I had desperately missed, and something I needed to feel again. I miss it every day but there are even bigger opportunities out there for me and I cannot wait to go find them. I'm not certain what the future holds for me at this point. Although I am not giving up by any means, I am taking a much-needed break next year to really focus on myself and where I want to go from here, free from the constraints of school and a virus. Hopefully, the

pandemic really is over, and the performance industry can bounce back better than ever. I have no doubt that it will, I just hope it's sooner rather than later.

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The University of Mississippi Department of Music
Presents
Junior Voice Recital
Emma Elizabeth Johnson, Soprano
Amanda Johnston, Piano

Come l' allodoletta
La Pastorella dell' Alpi

Stefano Donaudy (1879-1925)
Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Waldeinsamkeit op. 76 no. 3
Die Nacht op. 10 no. 3

Max Reger (1873-1916)
Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

L' heure exquise
From *Chansons grise*
Villanelle
From *Les nuits d'été*

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)
Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Batti, batti, o bel Masetto
From *Don Giovanni*

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Tell me, oh blue, blue sky
Vilia
From *The Merry Widow*

Vittorio Giannini (1903-1966)
Franz Lehár (1870-1948)

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance degree program.
Emma Elizabeth Johnson is a student of Jennifer Robinson.

Stefano Donaudy (1879-1925) began composing music in his early teens and is most famously known for his 1918 publication of art songs *36 Arie di Stile Antico* (*36 Arias in Antique Style*). This collection of songs features popular songs such as “Vaghissima sembianza” and “O Del Mio Amato Ben.” These songs convey deep emotional messages of current love and loss of love, which Donaudy heightens through his use of melodic, sensual lines. Donaudy abandoned composition in 1922 after the failure of his final Opera *La Fiamminga* (*The Flemish Woman*.)

Come l'allodoletta

“Come l’ allodoletta” is just one of the moving songs featured in *36 Arie di Stile Antico*. This piece conveys the aftermath of losing someone who was once close to you and brought you much happiness and joy.

Come l'allodoletta per li prati,
Cosi' fugge la pace e l'allegrezza
Da un cor gentile in cui sol regna amore!

*Like a little skylark over the meadows,
Peace and happiness fly
from a gentle heart is ruled by love!*

Passa ogni gioia, passa ogni dolzore
Da un cor gentile in cui sol regna amore!
E l'alma che ne sente la gravanza,
Sen' muore di gelo come un fior!

*Flows every joy; every sweetness
from a gentle heart is ruled by love!
And the soul which not feels its gravity,
feels death from cold like a flower!*

Text by Alberto Donaudy

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) is considered by many to be the greatest Italian composer of his time. Born into a highly musical family, he composed nearly forty operas by the age of 38. He gained most of his success with his comic operas such as *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Semiramide*. In these works, he breaks tradition by embellishing his melodies, making him the true creator of bel canto (a florid style of singing). Although he is remembered most for his operatic compositions, he also composed many art songs, piano solo pieces, and some chamber music.

La Pastorella dell'Alpi

This playful, upbeat melody tells the story of a shepherdess who lives in the Alps. She always has plenty of fresh fruit and flowers for all who travel near her. While she gives these men shelter and food, she also cautions them to not mistake her kindness for romantic affection, as she offers the “flower of her thoughts” to only one man.

Son bella pastorella,
Che scende ogni mattino
Ed offre un cestellino
Di fresche frutta e fior.

*I am the pretty shepherdess
that descends every morning
and offers a little basket
of fresh fruit and flowers*

Chi viene al primo albore
Avrà vezzose rose

*Whoever comes at the first dawn
will have pretty roses*

E poma rugiadose,
Venite al mio giardin,

*and dew sprinkled apples,
come to my garden*

Chi del notturno orrore
Smari la buona via,
Alla capanna mia
Ritroverà il cammin.

*Whoever in the night's terror
loses the safe path
at my little hut
will find the way again.*

Venite o passeggero,
La pastorella è qua,
Ma il fior del suo pensiero
Ad uno solo darà!

*Come oh traveler,
the shepherdess is here
but the flower of her thoughts
to one alone she will give!*

Text by Carlo Pepoli

Max Reger (1873-1916) is most widely known for his organ compositions that employ the use of Baroque forms. These compositions include the choral fantasia *Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott* and *Fantasia and Fugue in C minor*. He composed both of these works after an unpleasant experience in the military that affected both his physical and mental health. In addition to organ works, Reger composed chamber music, art songs, and choral/orchestral works. He also was appointed conductor of the Meiningen Court Orchestra in 1911.

Waldeinsamkeit op. 76 no. 3

In German, “Waldeinsamkeit” refers to the spiritual feeling one has of being alone in a forest. This song encapsulates that divine feeling perfectly. In the work, the lyrics depict the peaceful feeling of being secluded in the beautiful forest and simply being content. The only other living creature in the forest is the blackbird.

Gestern Abend in der stillen Ruh',
Sah' ich im Wald einer Amsel zu;
Als ich da so saß,
Meiner ganz vergaß:
Kommt mein Schatz und schleicht sich um mich
Und küsset mich

*Last evening in the still peacefulness,
I sat in the woods watching a blackbird
and, as I sat there,
completely engrossed in my thoughts,
my beloved came silently up to me
and kissed me.*

So viel Laub als an der Linden ist
Und so viel tausendmal hat
mich mein Schatz gekußt;
Denn ich muss gesteh'n,
Es hat's niemand geseh'n
Und die Amsel soll mein Zeuge sein:
Wir war'n allein.

*As many leaves as on the Linden tree
that is how many thousand times
my darling kissed me;
and I must confess,
no one saw us there,
for as the blackbird can attest,
we were alone.*

Frankish folksong text

Richard Strauss (1864-1949), known as one of the most prolific German Romantic composers, he created many works that are staples in the standard repertoire. He was born into a musical family, having composed 140 works by his 18th birthday. His success began in tone poems but grew widely with his boundary-pushing operas, *Salome*, *Elektra*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*. Considered to be Wagner's heir, you can hear Wagnerian influences in his compositions, as well as influences from Mozart.

Die Nacht op. 10 no. 3

Strauss is known for his expressive writing and legato lines, and "Die Nacht" showcases these characteristics. This poem expresses the fear that just as night steals the color from the world, it will steal their lover from them. This piece sounds tender and sweet, but the tinges of sadness are evident as well.

Aus dem Walde tritt die Nacht,
Aus den Bäumen schleicht sie leise,
trees,
Schaut sich um in weitem Kreise,
Nun gib acht.

*Out of the forest comes the night,
Quietly she moves in from behind the*

*She oversees all around her,
Beware now.*

Alle lichter dieser Welt,
Alle Blumen, alle Farben
Löscht sie aus und stiehlt die Garben
Weg vom Feld.

*All the lights of the world,
All the flowers, all the colors
she extinguishes and steals the sheaves
away from the field.*

Alles nimmt sie, was nur hold,
Nimmt das Silber weg des Stroms,
Nimmt vom Kupferdach des Doms,
Weg das Gold.

*She takes everything that is lovely
Steals the silver from the streams,
From the copper dome of the cathedral,
She takes away its gold.*

Ausgeplündert steht der Strauch,
Rücke näher, Seel an Seele;
O die Nacht, mir bangt, sie stehle
Dich mir auch.

*The spray of flowers stands plundered,
Draw closer, soul to soul;
Oh, I am afraid the night will steal
You, too, from me.*

Text by Hermann von Gilm zu Rosenegg

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) was a Venezuelan, naturalized French composer who is most known for his art songs. Several of his art songs remain in the concert repertoire and are known for being melodic and graceful. In addition to art songs, he composed operettas developed from the style established by Jacques Offenbach.

L'heure exquise

“L'heure exquise” is the fifth song of Hahn’s song cycle *Chansons Grises (Songs in Gray)*, which solidified Hahn’s reputation in Parisian concert halls. “L'heure exquise” is a dreamy and tranquil work that depicts two lovers meeting alone at night. The partners reflect on their beautiful surroundings and their future together.

La lune blanche
Luit dans les bois;
De chaque branche
Part une voix
Sous la ramée
O bien aimée.

*The moon white
shines in the woods;
from each branch
comes a voice
beneath the boughs
Oh my beloved.*

L'étang reflète,
Profond miroir,
La silhouette
Du saule noir
Où le vent pleure
Rêvons, c'est l'heure.

*The pool reflects,
deep mirror,
the silhouette
of the black willow
where the wind weeps
Let us dream, it is the hour*

Un vaste et tendre
Apaisement
Semble descendre
Du firmament
Que l'astre irise
C'est l'heure exquise.

*A vast and tender
calming
seems to descend
from the sky
that the moon illuminates
It is the exquisite hour.*

Text by Paul Verlaine

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) was a composer, critic and conductor of the Romantic period. He began music at a young age but was forced to study medicine instead. Going against his family’s wishes, Berlioz left medicine to become a composer. His works showcase the innovativeness and expression that were characteristic of the Romantic period. His most well-known pieces include the *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Grande Messe Des Morts*. The originality of his compositions may have worked against him during his lifetime, but appreciation for his music grew after his death.

Villanelle

“Villanelle” is the first song in Berlioz’s song cycle entitled *Les nuits d'été (Summer Nights)*. This song cycle is a setting of six poems by Théophile Gautier. “Villanelle” is a celebration of love and spring. The text speaks of the pleasures of walking together with your beloved and admiring the bloom of the new season.

Quand viendra la saison nouvelle,
Quand auront disparu les froids
Tous les deux nous irons, ma belle,

*When the new season comes,
When the cold has vanished,
The two of us will go, my beauty,*

Pour cueillir le muguet aux bois;
Sous nos pieds égrenant les perles
Que l'on voit au matin trembler,
Nous irons écouter les merles
Siffler

*to gather the Lillies in the woods;
scattering the dew beneath our feet
that we see in the morning trembling,
we will go to hear the blackbirds
singing.*

Le printemps est venu, ma belle;
C'est le mois des amants béni,
Et l'oiseau, satinant son aile, dit
ses vers au rebord du nid.
Oh! Viens donc sur ce banc de mousse
Pour parler de nos beaux amours,
Et dismoi de ta voix si douce:
Toujours!

*The spring has come, my beauty;
it is the month the lovers blessed,
and the bird, preening its wing sings
his verses on the edge of the nest.
Oh! Come to this mossy bank,
to speak of our beautiful love,
and tell me with your voice so sweet
forever!*

Loin, bien loin, égarant nos courses,
Faisons fuir le lapin caché,
Et le daim au miroir des sources
Admirant son grand bois penché;
Puis, chez nous,
tout heureux, tout aises,
En paniers enlaçant nos doigts,
Revenons, rapportant des fraises
Des bois.

*Far, very far, straying from our course
We make the hidden rabbit flee,
and the deer, mirrored in the spring,
admires his great antlers lowered;
then to our home we will return,
all happy and content,
like baskets interwoven are our fingers
let us return bringing strawberries
of the woods.*

Text by Théophile Gautier

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791) was a prolific Austrian composer who is widely recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music. Unlike other composers, he wrote in every musical genre of his day, succeeding in everyone. He composed operas, concertos, symphonies, and sonatas that made classical music what it is today. These works are marked by vivid emotion and sophisticated textures.

Batti, batti, o bel Masetto

This aria from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* takes place towards the end of Act One. Zerlina, a young peasant girl, was nearly seduced by the evil casanova Don Giovanni. Her fiancée is jealous and outraged by this. In response, Zerlina tries to calm him by telling him he can punish her, even though she is innocent of anything to do with Don Giovanni. At the end of the aria, she persuades him of her innocence, and she remarks that they will spend their life in "happiness and joy."

Ma se colpa io non ho,
ma se da lui ingannata rimasi!
Eppoi, che temi?
Tranquillati mia vita;

*But what if I was not at fault?
What if it was all his doing?
And then, what are you afraid of?
Calm yourself my dearest;*

Non mi toccò la punta della dita.
Non me lo credi? Ingrato!
Vien qui, sfogati, ammazzami,
Fa tutto di me quel che ti piace
Ma poi, Masetto mio,
Ma poi fa pace.

*He didn't touch the tip of my finger.
You don't believe me? Ingrate!
Come here, blow off steam, kill me,
Do all to me that which you please,
But then Masetto mine,
But then make peace.*

Batti, batti, o bel Masetto,
La tua povera Zerlina;
Staro qui come agnellina
Le tue botte ad aspettar
Lascero straziarmi il crine
Lasciero cavarmi gliocchi
E le care tue manine
Lieta poi sapro baciari

*Beat me, Beat me, oh dear Masetto,
Your poor Zerlina;
I will remain here as a little lamb
Your blows to await
I will allow you to tear out my hair,
I will allow you to carve out my eyes,
and your dear hands
Happily then I will kiss*

Ah, lo vedo, non hai core!
Pace, pace, o vita mia,
In contento ed allegria
Notte e di vogliam passar.

*Ah! I see you do not have the heart!
Peace, peace, oh my life,
in happiness and joy
Day and night we will spend.*

Text by Lorenzo da Ponte

Vittorio Giannini (1903-1966) was a Neo-Romantic composer and educator. His creativity embraced all standard music genres, representing an evolution of musical techniques inherited from European classical tradition. His output includes operas, art songs, symphonies, and many choral and instrumental works. His traditional approach mixed with a romantic, warm spirit define his compositional style.

Tell me, oh blue, blue Sky

This beautiful and haunting piece conveys the feelings of someone who has lost their beloved but is not sure why he had to leave. She attributes the feeling of losing him to the loss of the summer season and the barrenness that it brings. The abrupt crescendo and quickened tempo in the piano showcases the intense emotion and heightened feeling of longing, as she somewhat demands an answer.

Summer has flown, the leaves are falling,
I hear a voice, your voice, calling,
I see a face, your face, pleading,
I feel a heart, your heart, bleeding.

Tell me, Oh blue, blue sky,
Why did we part?
Tell me, oh whispering wind, breathe on my heart.
Breathe on my lonely heart, that too has bled.

Tell what is left in life, since love has fled, since love has fled?

Tell me, Tell me, Tell me, Oh blue, blue sky,
Tell me, Oh blue, blue sky!

Text by Karl Flaster

Franz Lehár (1870-1948) was born to an army bandmaster, which was his major source of musical influence growing up. His reputation is best upheld by his numerous feel-good operettas, *The Merry Widow* being his most well-known. With this operetta, he created a new style of Viennese operetta that included waltz tunes and imitations of the cancan dance. In addition to operettas, Lehár composed marches, waltzes, and dances.

Vilia

The song “Vilia” from *The Merry Widow* takes place at the very beginning of Act Two and is sung by Hanna, the wealthy widow and title role. Hanna is throwing a party at her house and, to entertain her guests, she tells the riveting tale of this mysterious maid of the woods known as Vilia.

There once was a Vilia, a witch of the wood,
A hunter beheld her alone as she stood,
The spell of her beauty upon him was laid,
He looked and he longed for the magical maid
For a sudden tremor ran, right through the love bewildered man,
And he sighed as a hapless lover can

Vilia O Vilia, the witch of the wood!
Would I not die for you, dear, if I could?
Vilia, O Vilia, my love and my bride!
Softly and sadly he sighed.

The wood maiden smiled and no answer she gave,
But beckoned him into the shade of the cave
He never had known such a rapturous bliss,
No maiden of mortals so sweetly can kiss.
As before her feet he lay, she vanished in the wood away,
And he cried vainly till his dying day!

Text by Viktor Léon and Leo Stein

The University of Mississippi Department of Music presents
Senior Voice Recital

Emma Elizabeth Johnson, Soprano

Amanda Johnston, Piano

Friday, April 1st, 7:30 PM
David H. Nutt Auditorium

Mio tesoro per te moro
Farò la vendetta

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)

Jake South, Trumpet

Almen se non poss'io
La farfalletta
Il fervido desiderio
Malinconia ninfa gentile

Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835)

Fêtes Galantes
Mandoline
Sous le dôme épais

Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947)
Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

Alexis Rose, Mezzo-soprano

~**Intermission**~

Am see
Seligkeit
Die liebe hat gelogen
Auflösung

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Laurie's song
from *The Tender land*

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

The Singer
A Piper
Vanilla Ice Cream
from *She Loves Me*

Michael Head (1900-1976)
John Duke (1899-1984)
Jerry Bock (1928-2010)

The Light in the Piazza
from *The Light in the Piazza*

Adam Guettel (1964-)

This recital is in partial fulfillment for the Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance.
Emma Johnson is a student of Mrs. Jennifer Robinson.

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) is a renowned oratorio and operatic composer who is credited with setting the standard for Italian Opera during the mid to late baroque period. He is the best-known composer of the Neapolitan school of music, a group that defined the musical styles found in Italian composition. Scarlatti's prestigious work in the arts allowed him to write and perform for visiting nobility and earned him a position as Maestro di Cappella in the court at Naples. His music is identified by beautifully refined melodies and full, rich accompaniments.

Mio tesoro per te moro

“Mio tesoro per te moro” is the sixth in a collection of seven arias written by Scarlatti for soprano, trumpet, and continuo. The melody is stated elegantly and gracefully in the opening bars by the trumpet and then passed to the vocal line, which turns the melody downward into a somewhat “longing” sigh. The text is simple, depicting someone yearning for the safety and comfort of their love.

Mio tesoro per te moro!
Vieni presto a consolar.

*My treasure, I die for you!
Come quickly to console.*

Questo cor che tanto brama
E ti chiama a ristorar.

*Come to this heart that longs for you
and begs you for comfort*

Text by Anonymous

Farò la vendetta

“Farò la vendetta” is the seventh aria from the same collection. It sets an overall mood of resoluteness spurred by jealous anger. The piece incorporates call and response interplay between the voice and trumpet to depict the passionate motives behind the text.

Farò la vendetta
Che a me s'aspetta
Di quel perfido traditor

*I will deal out the vengeance
that is expected of me
on that perfidious traitor*

Che mi ha sì vilipesa
Fammi star così sospesa
Ed ha dato ad altri il cor.

*who has offended me
who has discarded me
and given his heart to another*

Text by Anonymous

Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835) had the strongest flare for romance amongst 19th century Italian composers. Coming from a line of musicians, he was an instant prodigy. He wrote many successful operas including *La sonnambula*, *Norma*, and *I puritani*. Although primarily recognized as a composer of Bel Canto operas, Bellini's art songs showcase his compositional genius through flowing melodies and textual drama, frequently using poems that express dramatic themes of unrequited love and melancholy.

Almen se non poss'io

"Almen se non poss'io" ("At least, if I am not able) is an elegant, slowly moving piece that showcases intense passion with its gorgeous melodic lines. The text is a plea to love itself, as the singer experiences the loss of their loved one and expresses the need for their love to continue to follow them, even in death. This piece is a part of Bellini's collection "Sei Ariette," written in 1829.

Almen se non poss'io
Seguir l'amato bene,
Affetti del cor mio,
Seguitelo per me.

*At least, if I am not able
to follow my beloved,
affections of my heart,
go with him for me.*

Già sempre a lui vicino
Raccolti amor vi tiene
E insolito cammino
Questo per voi non è.

*Already near him always,
Love keeps you gathered,
and the path to him is not
an unfamiliar one for you.*

Text by Pietro Metastasio

La Farfalletta

"La Farfalletta" ("The little butterfly") was composed by Bellini at the young age of 12. This joyful piece includes a bouncy accompaniment and a light, charming vocal line. The singer is attempting to attract a butterfly, promising to protect it from danger. In the third verse, the singer expresses the desire to give the butterfly to her beloved as a special present.

Farfalletta, aspetta, aspetta
Non volar con tanta fretta
Far del mal non ti vogl'io
Ferma, appaga il desir mio
Vo' baciarti e il cibo darti
Da perigli preservarti
Di cristallo stanza avrai
E tranquilla ognor avrai

*Little Butterfly, wait, wait
Don't fly away so quickly
I don't want to hurt you
Stop, appease my desire
I want to kiss you and give you food,
to save you from danger.
You will have a room of crystal
and will always live in peace.*

L'ali aurate, screziate
So che Aprile t'ha ingemmate

*Your gold, shimmering wings
I know that April has bejeweled*

Che sei vaga, vispa e snella
Fra tue eguali la più bella.
Ma crin d'oro ha il mio Tesoro
Il fanciullo ch'amo e adoro
E a te pari vispo e snello
Fra i suo eguali egli è il più bello

*I know you're pretty, lively, and graceful,
among your equals the most beautiful.
But my beloved has golden hair,
the lad I love and adore.
And as you, he's lively and graceful,
among his equals the most beautiful*

Vo' carpirti, ad esso offrirti
Più che rose, gigli e mirti
Ti fia caro il mio fanciullo
Ed a lui sarai trastullo
Nell'aspetto e terso petto
Rose e gigli ha il mio diletto
Vieni scampa da perigli
Non cercar più rose e gigli

*I want to snatch and offer you to him;
dearer than roses, lilies, and myrtles,
my lad will be to you
and you will be his plaything.
In his looks, in his pure bosom,
my darling has roses and lilies.
Come, escape from danger,
seek roses and lilies no more.*

Text by Anonymous

Il fervido desiderio

“Il fervido desiderio” (The fervent desire) is from Bellini’s collection “Tre ariette.” This piece was written near the end of Bellini’s life and exemplifies his mature compositional style. It features a beautiful, melodic vocal line. The text describes the singer’s longing to see their lover again, growing more impatient as the song progresses.

Quando verrà quel dì
che riveder potrò
quel che l'amante cor tanto desia?

*When will that day come
when I shall see again
the one whom my loving heart desires so much?*

Quando verrà quel dì
che in sen l'accoglierò
bella fiamma d'amor, anima mia?

*When will that day come
when I shall gather you to my bosom
beautiful flame of love, my soul?*

Text by Anonymous

Malinconia ninfa gentile

“Malinconia ninfa gentile” (“Melancholy, gentle nymph) is the first composition from Bellini’s “Sei Ariette” This dramatic composition has a frantic piano accompaniment, meant to mimic the murmuring of streams and fountains which are suggested by the text’s pastoral setting. In the text, the singer is expressing their devotion to sadness and their promise to be pleased and to never ask for more, so long as the god’s grant them fountains and hills.

Malinconia, Ninfa gentile,
la vita mia consacro a te;
i tuoi piaceri chi tiene a vile,
ai piacer veri nato non è.

*Melancholy, gentle nymph,
I devote my life to you.
One who despises your pleasures
Is not born to true pleasures*

Fonti e colline chiesi agli Dei;
m'udiro alfine, pago io vivrò,
né mai quel fonte co' desir miei,
né mai quel monte trapasserò.
No, no, mai

*I asked the gods for fountains and hills;
They heard me at last; I live satisfied
Even though, with my desires, I never
go beyond that fountain and that mountain
No, no, never*

Text by Ippolito Pindemonte

Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947), a Venezuelan, was a naturalized French composer who is most known for his art songs. He wrote approximately 84 mélodies for solo voice. Several of these compositions remain in the concert repertory and are known for being melodic and graceful. In addition to art songs, he composed operettas developed from the style established by Jacques Offenbach.

Fêtes Galantes

Verlaine's collection of poems entitled "Fêtes galantes" was inspired by the graceful paintings of Jean-Antoine Watteau that depict elegant ladies and gallant cavaliers exchanging courtly pleasures. Hahn's setting of this text resembles Fauré's setting, especially in the opening vocal line, but is even more sparkly and bright, with the piano sounding like a child's music box.

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses
Échangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses

*The gallant serenaders
and their fair listeners
exchange sweet nothings
beneath singing boughs*

C'est Tircis et c'est Aminte
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre
Et c'est Damis qui pour mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre

*Tircis is there, Aminte is there,
and tedious Clitandre too,
and Damis who for many a cruel maid
writes many a tender song*

Leurs courtes vestes de soie
Leurs longues robes à queues
Leur élégance, leur joie
Et leurs molles ombres bleues

*Their short silken doublets,
Their long trailing gowns,
Their elegance, their joy,
And their soft blue shadows*

Tourbillonnent dans l'extase
D'une lune rose et grise
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise

*Whirl madly in the rapture
of a grey and roseate moon
and the mandolin jangles on
in the shivering breeze.*

Text by Paul Verlaine

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) was a French pianist, organist, composer, and teacher. He is most well known for perfecting the *mélodie*, or French art song. Fauré is considered to this day to be one of the most famous French composers of his generation and a massive influence on 20th century composers. His charming melodies paint a musical picture for the listener to better fully grasp the beauty of the text. He exhibits great skill in personifying love and nature in his compositions.

Mandoline

Fauré composed “Mandoline” as a part of the song cycle “Cinq Mélodies de Venise,” and was the only piece in the cycle to actually be written while he was in Venice. This text by Paul Verlaine has been set by many composers. Fauré’s version contains a light and playful vocal line with the piano plucking cheerful eighth notes to emulate the mandolin.

Same text as above

Léo Delibes (1836-1891) was a French opera and ballet composer who was the first to obtain great success from writing music for the ballet. His music is light, elegant, and reflects the spirit of the Second Empire in France. His pioneering work for the ballet opened up the field for other composers, and his influence can be traced back to the music of Tchaikovsky. He is best known for his ballet *Coppélia* and the famous Flower Duet from his opera *Lakmé*.

Sous le dôme épais (Flower duet)

The Flower duet takes place in Act one and is sung by Lakmé, the daughter of a Brahmin priest, and her servant and companion Mallika. The two girls sing this pastoral duet as they begin their morning tasks. Throughout the duet, Lakmé tries to erase her fears for her father’s wellbeing and enjoy the beautiful spring time with the assistance of Mallika. The duet has become very popular in recent years due to its use in films and advertisements.

Viens, Mallika, les lianes en fleurs
Jettent déjà leur ombre
Sur le ruisseau sacré qui coule,
calme et sombre,
Éveille par le chant des oiseaux tapageurs!

*Come Mallika, the blooming lianas
are already throwing their shadow
over the sacred stream which runs,
calm and somber,
awakened by the song of noisy birds!*

Oh, maitresse, c’est l’heure
ou je te vois sourire,
L’heure bénie ou je puis lire
Dans le cœur toujours ferme de Lakmé!

*Oh, mistress, it is the hour
when I see you smiling,
The blessed hour when I can read
into the ever closed heart of Lakmé!*

Sous le dôme épais,

Under the thick dome

Ou le blanc jasmin
A la rose s'assemble,
Sur la rive en fleurs
Riant au matin,
Viens, descendons ensemble.

*where the white jasmine
and the rose intertwine,
on the riverbank in bloom
laughing in the morning,
come, let us go down together.*

Doucement glissons
De son flot charmant
Suivons le courant fuyant
Dans l'onde frémissante,
D'une main nonchalante,
Viens, gagnons le bord,
Où la source dort
Et l'oiseau, l'oiseau chante.

*Gently we glide
on its charming waters
let us follow the fleeting current
on the shimmering waves
with an uncaring hand,
come, let us reach the bank,
where the spring sleeps
and the bird, the bird sings.*

Sous le dôme épais,
Sous le blanc jasmin
Ah! Descendons ensemble.

*Beneath the thick dome,
beneath the white jasmine,
ah! Let us go down together.*

Mais, je ne sais quelle crainte subite,
S'empare de moi,
Quand mon père va seul à leur ville maudite;
Je tremble, je tremble d'effroi

*But, I do not know what sudden fear
takes hold of me,
my father goes alone to the cursed city
I tremble, I tremble with fear!*

Pourquoi le Dieu Ganeça le protège,
Jusqu'à l'étang où s'ébattent joyeux
Les cygnes aux ailes de neige,
Allons cueillir les lotus bleus.

*So that the Ganesha protects him,
to the pond where frolic joyously
the swans with wings of snow,
let us go gather the blue lotus.*

Oui, près de cygnes aux ailes de neige,
Allons cueilli les lotus bleus.

*Yes, near swans with wings of snow,
let us go gather the blue lotus.*

Text by Edmond Gondinet and Philippe Gille

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) was an Austrian composer who bridged the worlds of Classical and Romantic music. He is one of the most performed composers of all time, composing over 600 German art songs. His contributions to both romanticism and song are immeasurable, with many composers looking back to him for inspiration.

Am See

“Am See,” meaning “By the lake,” is one of Schubert’s many pieces that uses the piano accompaniment to invoke the feeling of water by utilizing graceful and curving motions in the piano. The poem is describing the beauty of sunshine hitting the water in the morning hours, which creates star-like images in the lake.

In des Sees Wogenspiele
Fallen durch den Sonnenschein
Sterne, ach, gar viele, viele,
Flammend leuchtend stets hinein.

*Into the play of waves on the lake
fall through the sunshine
stars, ah, so many, many
blazing and shining.*

Wenn der Mensch zum See geworden,
In der Seele Wogenspiele
Fallen aus des Himmels Pforten
Sterne, ach, gar viele, viele.

*When man has become the lake,
into the play of waves of the soul
will fall out of heaven’s gates
Stars, ah, so many, many.*

Text by Franz Seraph Ritter von Bruchmann

Seligkeit

“Seligkeit,” meaning “Bliss,” is a giddy waltz that perfectly personifies utter joy. Written by one of Schubert’s favorite poets, Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty, the first two verses wistfully tell of the delights of heaven, while in the third verse the singer contemplates simply finding heaven on earth with their lover.

Freuden sonder Zahl
Blühn im Himmelssaal
Engeln und Verklärten,
Wie die Väter lehrten.
O da möcht' ich sein,
Und mich ewig freun!

*Joys without number
bloom in the halls of heaven
angels and transfigured souls,
as our fathers taught us.
How I'd love to be there
and rejoice eternally!*

Jedem lächelt traut
Eine Himmelsbraut;
Harf' und Psalter klinget,
Und man tanzt und singet.
O da möcht' ich sein,
Und mich ewig freun!

*A heavenly bride smiles
sweetly on everyone.
harp and psalter resound
and there's dancing and singing.
how I'd love to be there
and rejoice eternally!*

Lieber bleib' ich hier,
Lächelt Laura mir
Einen Blick, der saget,
Daß ich ausgeklaget.
Selig dann mit ihr,
Bleib' ich ewig hier!

*I'd sooner stay here
if Laura smiles on me
with a look that says
I've to grieve no more.
Blissfully then with her
I'd stay forever here!*

Text by Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty

Die Liebe hat gelogen

A dramatic and heart wrenching piece from Schubert, “Die Liebe hat gelogen,” meaning “the love has lied” contains a simple melody which evokes the pain the singer is feeling. The music is full of dramatic crescendos and decrescendos, simulating the fluctuation of intensity and sorrow the singer feels towards the disloyalty of their former lover. Schubert embodies the feeling of heartbreak and betrayal through the early Romantic style in this piece.

Die Liebe hat gelogen,
Die Sorge lastet schwer,
Betrogen, ach! betrogen
Hat alles mich umher!

*Love has lied
sorrow oppresses me,
I am betrayed, ah, betrayed
by all around!*

Es fließen heiße Tropfen
Die Wange stets herab,
Laß ab, mein Herz zu klopfen,
Du armes Herz laß ab!

*Hot tears flow
constantly down my cheeks
Oh cease, my heart, to beat
you poor heart, stop!*

Text by August von Platen-Hallermünde

Auflösung

“Auflösung,” meaning “dissolution,” is a highly dramatic piece, with sweeping musical lines that rise from the depths. This composition marked a return and a farewell to the poetry of Mayrhofer after a two year silence from Schubert. The poem evokes the feelings of revenge and power, similar to the “Queen of the Night” aria from Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*.

Verberg dich, Sonne,
Denn die Glut der Wonne
Versengen mein Gebein;
Verstummet, Töne,
Frühlings Schöne
Flüchte dich und lass mich allein!

*Hide yourself, sun,
for the fires of rapture
burn through my whole being.
Be silent, sounds;
spring beauty,
flee, and let me be alone!*

Quillen doch aus allen Falten
Meiner Seele liebliche Gewalten,
Die mich umschlingen,
Himmlich singen.
Geh unter, Welt, und störe
Nimmer die süßen, ätherischen Chöre.

*From every recess of my soul
gentle powers well up
and envelop me
with celestial song.
Dissolve, world, and never more
disturb the sweet ethereal choirs.*

Text by Johann Mayrhofer

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) was an American composer whose compositions standardized American themes in a modern style. Copland was a composer of operas, ballets, orchestral music, band music, chamber music, choral music, and film scores. His most famous works are his three ballets based on American folk material: “Billy the kid,” “Rodeo,” and “Appalachian Spring.” He was a composer for the better part of four decades and expressed “the deepest reactions of the American consciousness to the American scene.”

Laurie’s Song

“Laurie’s Song” is from Copland’s opera *The Tender Land*, written in 1954. The opera follows a middle-class rural family on their farm, with “Laurie’s Song” taking place in act one. The aria follows Laurie’s uncertainty of her place in the world, as she has just graduated from high school and has never experienced anything other than farm life. While she loves her family dearly, she longs to experience something more, despite her fear of change.

Once I thought I’d never grow tall as this fence
Time dragged heavy and slow
But April came and August went
Before I knew just what they meant
And little by little I grew
And as I grew I came to know
How fast the time could go

Once I thought I’d never go outside this fence
This space was plenty for me
But I walked down the road one day
And just happened I can’t say
But little by little it came to be
That line between the earth and sky
Came beckoning to me

Now the time has grown short
The world has grown so wide
I’ll be graduated soon
Why am I strange inside?
What makes me think I’d like to try
To go down all those roads beyond that line
Above the earth and ‘neath the sky?

Tomorrow when I sit upon
The graduation platform stand
I know my hand will shake
When I reach out to take that paper
With the ribboned band

Now that all the learning's done
Oh who knows what will now begin?
Oh it's so strange
I'm strange inside
The time has grown so short
The world so wide

Text by Horace Everett

Michael Head (1900-1976) was a British composer, pianist, organist, and singer. His compositional output consists mainly of songs, although he also wrote some choral works and piano concertos. His best known song cycles are “Over the rim of the moon” and “Songs of the Countryside,” as well as the popular Christmas carol “The Little Road to Bethlehem.” He was known for his connection to the Royal Academy of Music.

The Singer

“The Singer” is an intimate a capella piece which recounts the singer’s memory of meeting a strange man. The melody is highly chromatic and dreamy, which suggests the peculiar nature of the figure being described. The “Fa la la” melody is repeated multiple times in the piece but is elongated at the very end to show the singer’s yearning to know more about the mysterious person she met on a hill.

I met a singer on the hill,
He wore a tattered cloak;
His cap was torn,
His shoes were worn,
And dreamily he spoke.
Fa la la la la la ...

A wrinkled face, a cheery smile,
And a nobby stick had he;
His eyes were grey and far away
And changeful as the sea.

I offered him a piece of gold
And hoped that he would stay.
No word he spoke, but shook his head
And smiled and went his way.
Fa la la la la la ...

I watched the singer down the hill.
My eyes went following after,
I thought I heard a fairy flute
And the sound of fairy laughter,

Fa la la la la la...

Text by Bronnie Taylor

John Duke (1899-1984) was one of America's leading composers of art songs, as well as an accomplished pianist. His catalog contains 265 art songs and his compositions were very popular in the middle of the 20th century. Duke believed that in good songs the words become assimilated with the music. He accomplished this by writing lovingly for the voice and the piano. He frequently used American poets for his songs, including Frost and Teasdale.

A Piper

"A Piper" is a piece in which the singer is recounting a story of meeting an interesting individual. The coloratura passages at the beginning and end of the song mimic the cheerful tune the piper plays. At the end of the piece, the melody line slows down and becomes quieter, suggesting that the piper is now on his way to another town.

A piper in the streets today
set up, and tuned, and started to play,
and away, away, away on the tide
of his music we started; on ev'ry side
doors and windows were opened wide,
and men left down their work and came,
and women with petticoats colored like flame.
And little bare feet that were blue with cold
went dancing back to the age of gold,
And all the world went gay, went gay
For half an hour in the street today.

Text by Seumas O'Sullivan

Jerry Bock (1928-2010) was an American composer who was known for his many successful Broadway shows. With Sheldon Harnick as his lyricist, they yielded five Broadway show scores in seven years, which is still a record today. These shows are *The Body Beautiful*, *Fiorello!*, *Tenderloin*, *She Loves me*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Bock is also an esteemed inductee into the Theater Hall of Fame and the 1990 recipient of the Johnny Mercer Award, the Songwriters Hall of fame's highest honor.

Vanilla Ice Cream

"Vanilla Ice Cream" is from Bock's and Harnick's 1963 musical *She Loves Me*. The piece is sung by Amalia after she is seemingly "stood up" by her secret penpal after they had planned to go on a date. In actuality, her penpal is Georg, her coworker that she is always bickering with. Amalia is distraught over being left at the cafe and calls in sick for work the next day. Georg, being worried about her, visits her at her apartment,

bringing her a gift of vanilla ice cream. Georg, afraid to admit to Amalia that he is her pen pal, makes up a story that he saw an older, bald, fat gentlemen looking into the café, and says this must be her penpal. Amalia is surprised to find how much she enjoys her conversation with Georg and can think of little else besides his kindness and his gift of ice cream.

Dear friend
I am so sorry about last night
It was a nightmare in every way
But together you and I will laugh at last night someday

Ice cream
He brought me ice cream!
Vanilla ice cream!
Imagine that!
Ice cream, and for the first time
We were together without a spat!
Friendly
He was so friendly
That isn't like him
I'm simply stunned
Will wonders never cease?
Will wonders never cease?
It's been a most peculiar day!
Will wonders never cease?
Will wonders never cease?

Oh, where was I?
I am so sorry about last night
It was a nightmare in every way
But together you and I will laugh at last night someday!
I sat there waiting in that café
And never guessing that you were fat... oh!
That you were near
You were outside looking bald... oh, no!
Dear Friend
I am so sorry about last night

Last night I was so nasty!
Well, he deserved it, but even so
That George is not like this George
This is a new George that I don't know
Somehow it all reminds me of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
When right before my eyes
A man that I despise has turned into a man I like!
It's almost like a dream, as strange as it may seem

He came to offer me vanilla ice cream

Text by Sheldon Harnick

Adam Guettel (1964-) is a composer and lyricist who currently lives in New York City. The grandson of theatre composer Richard Rodgers, Guettel is best known for his musical *The Light in the Piazza*, which premiered on Broadway in 2005 and went on to receive six Tony awards, including best original score and best orchestration. Other works by Guettel include *Floyd Collins* and *Saturn Returns*. Guettel also works as a teacher, leading masterclasses and seminars at many universities.

The Light in the Piazza

The title song from Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza* occurs at the beginning of act two after an emotional conversation between Clara and her mother Margaret regarding Clara's independence and her desire to marry Fabrizio, the young Italian boy she falls in love with during their trip to Florence, Italy. At the end of the song Clara realizes that her "light" is the love and passion she feels towards Fabrizio.

I don't see a miracle shining from the sky.
I'm no good at statues and stories, I try.
That's not what I think about.
That's not what I see.
I know what the sunlight can be

The light, the light in the Piazza.
Tiny, sweet and then it grows
And then it fills the air!
Who knows what you call it
I don't care!
Out of somewhere, I have something I have never had
And sad is happy, that's all I see

The light in the Piazza, the light in the Piazza.
It's rushing up, it's pouring out
It's flying through the air!
All through the air
Who knows what you call it,
But it's there! It is there!
All I see is, All I want is tearing from inside!
I see it, now I see it.
Everywhere, it's everywhere!
It's everything and everywhere, Fabrizio
The Light in the Piazza
My love

Text by Adam Guettel

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- **Academic:** gain an overall historical perspective of music literature, including major composers and compositions.

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University of Mississippi Opera Theatre
Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts
University of Mississippi



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UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI OPERA THEATRE

PRESENTS

**THE LIGHT IN THE
PIAZZA**

Book by CRAIG LUCAS
Music and Lyrics by ADAM GUETTEL

Produced by the University of Mississippi Department of Music

Based on the novel by ELIZABETH SPENCER

with (in alphabetical order)

Zoe Bofill	Jovania Correa-Coleman	Calvin Ellis
Bill Ewing	CJ Hancock	Mary Donnelly Haskell
Katherine Hovan	Emma Elizabeth Johnson	Abby Miller
Caleb Pearce	Christine Powell-Thomas	Alexis Rose
Miranda Shapiro	Abil Thomas	Isalah Traylor
	Daniel Wynn	

<i>Sound Designer</i> Samantha Palumbo	<i>Music Director and Conductor</i> Amanda Johnston	<i>Scenic Designer</i> Cody Stockstill
<i>Lighting and Production Designer</i> Annalise Caudle	<i>Stage Manager</i> Melanie Deas	

Director
Blake McIver Ewing

Original Broadway Production by Lincoln Center Theater, New York City, 2005

The World Premiere of *The Light in the Piazza* was produced by the Intiman Theatre
Seattle, Washington. Opening Night: June 14, 2003
Bertlett Sher, Artistic Director Laura Penn, Managing Director
and The Goodman Theatre, Chicago, Illinois. Opening Night: January 20, 2004
Robert Falls, Artistic Director Roche Schuller, Executive Director
Developed with the Assistance of the Sundance Institute Theatre Laboratory

The Light in the Piazza is presented through special arrangement with R & H Theatricals,
a Concord Theatricals Company: www.rh.com
and produced by arrangement with Turner Entertainment Co.,
owner of the original motion picture "Light in the Piazza"

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A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

The University of Mississippi is dedicated to supporting future artists, and UM Music is in an incredible era. Both the enrollment and level of students are at an all-time high and innovative initiatives are our norm. These successes are possible because of the support of the administration at the University of Mississippi, especially Chancellor Glenn Boyce, Provost Noel Wilkin, and Dean of Liberal Arts Lee Cohen. We are also soaring because of our incredible faculty and their dedication to excellence both in and out of the classroom.

This semester, it has been an honor having Faculty Artist in Residence Blake McIver Ewing co-teaching Opera Theatre with Professor Amanda Johnston and directing this production. His vast professional experience and generosity of knowledge has positively impacted our department. This production also connected our students with other music professionals, including successful UM Music alumni Mary Donnelly Haskell and Calvin Ellis, who generously shared their time and talents performing with future graduates. We even had the honor of hosting Adam Guettel, Tony Award-winning composer of *The Light in the Piazza*. I sincerely thank each member of the "Piazza Team" for their contributions in making this production a success.

Please contact me to learn about becoming a student at UM Music. We are dedicated to tailor-made experiences and look forward to meeting you. If you want to support UM Music initiatives, I welcome the opportunity to speak with you.

Happy Birthday, Elizabeth Spencer! Thank you for creating a work that continues to impact the world. We celebrate you, this flagship institution, and the great state of Mississippi.

Nancy Maria Balach
Department of Music Chair



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CAST

Cast Members	
Margaret Johnson	MARY DONNELLY HASKELL
Clara Johnson	EMMA ELIZABETH JOHNSON
Fabrizio Naccarelli	ISAAH TRAYLOR
Giuseppe Naccarelli	CALEB PEARCE
Franca Naccarelli	ZOE BOFILL
Signora Naccarelli	CALVIN ELLIS
Signora Naccarelli	KATHERINE HOVAN
Roy Johnson	BILL EWING
Tour Guide	ALEXIS ROSE
Priest	CJ HANCOCK
NUN	MIRANDA SHAPIRO
FLORENTINES	JOVANIA CORREA-COLEMAN, CJ HANCOCK, ABBY MILLER, CHRISTINE POWELL-THOMAS, ALEXIS ROSE, MIRANDA SHAPIRO, ABI THOMAS, DANIEL WYNN

Production / Creative	
DIRECTOR	BLAKE McIVER EWING
MUSIC DIRECTOR, CONDUCTOR	AMANDA JOHNSTON
STAGE MANAGER	MELANIE DEAS
LIGHTING, PRODUCTION DESIGNER	ANNALISE CAUDLE
SCENIC DESIGNER	CODY STOCKSTILL
SOUND DESIGNER	SAMANTHA PALUMBO

Orchestra	
CONDUCTOR	AMANDA JOHNSTON
PIANO	ADRIENNE PARK
HARP	FRANCES COBB
VIOLIN	OLVIA COYNE
CELLO	CHRISTINE KRALIK
BASS	GREG JOHNSON

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WHO'S WHO

MELANIE DEAS

STAGE MANAGER

Melanie Deas has worked as an arts manager, writer, director, designer, translator, and dramaturg across the United States for more than three decades. Ms. Deas received her AB in History and Literature from Harvard and her MFA training in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from Yale School of Drama. From 1999 to 2007, Melanie worked at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, in the Office of the Boards of Overseers. Ms. Deas returned to her hometown of Tupelo, Mississippi in 2007 to serve as Executive Director of Link Centre. Melanie is the technical director/stage manager for the annual Boys and Girls Clubs of North Mississippi Dance Like the Stars and Cooking Like the Stars events, and for North Mississippi Symphony Orchestra concerts. In 2016, Melanie directed the presentation that helped the City of Tupelo bring home its record fifth All America City Award from the National Civic League.

ANNALISE CAUDLE

LIGHTING, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Annalise V. Caudle is a Theatrical Lighting Designer. Originally from DeSoto, Texas, she received her MFA from Texas State University. Annalise has worked regionally as both LD and ALD for companies such as Milwaukee Rep, Florida Rep, The Paramount Theatre, The Goodman, ZACH Theatre, and Maine State Music Theatre. She is thrilled to be joining the University of Mississippi Theatre and Film faculty.

CODY STOCKSTILL

SCENIC DESIGNER

Cody Stockstill is a designer and Assistant Professor of Scenic Design in the University of Mississippi Department of Theatre and Film. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Technology from the University of Southern Mississippi (2011). Upcoming design credits include projection and scenic design for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* at New Stage Theatre and *Romeo and Juliet* at UM Theatre and Film. Past design credits include *Ragtime* at Nashville Repertory Theatre, *Legally Blonde* at UM Theatre and Film, and *Hell in High Water*, *Madagascar*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Peter Pan*, and *The Great Gatsby* at New Stage Theatre. Before coming to UM Theatre and Film, Cody served as Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Theatre at Mississippi State University where he designed over 20 productions including an original adaptation of *Beowulf*, which he co-wrote and directed.

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WHO'S WHO

SAMANTHA PALUMBO

SOUND DESIGNER

Samantha Palumbo is a sound designer, touring technician, and scenic artist. Born and raised in Phoenix, AZ, Sam moved to the great white north to earn her BA in Sound Design from Michigan Technological University. Her summers in college took her across the country to work for various theatres and production companies. She ran off and joined the circus shortly after to become a Touring Audio Technician with Feld Entertainment for their production of *Disney on Ice: Road Trip Adventure*. Excited to move to Oxford from Milwaukee, Sam is equipped with her traveling cactus, DnD dice, knitting needles and hiking shoes, ready to explore what Mississippi has to offer.

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SONGS

ACT I

Overture	Orchestra
Statues and Stories	Margaret, Clara
The Beauty Is	Clara
Il Mondo Era Vuoto	Fabrizio
American Dancing	Orchestra
Passaggiata	Fabrizio, Clara
The Joy You Feel	Franca
Dividing Day	Margaret
Hysteria/Lullaby	Clara, Margaret
Say It Somehow	Clara, Fabrizio

ACT II

Entr'acte	Orchestra
Aiutami	Fabrizio, Giuseppe, Signor Naccarelli, Signora Naccarelli, Franca
The Light in the Piazza	Clara
Octet	Company
Clara's Tirade	Clara
The Beauty Is (Reprise)	Margaret
Let's Walk	Signor Naccarelli, Margaret
Clara's Interlude	Clara
Love to Me	Fabrizio
Fable	Margaret

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