Settle the Score

Performer's Analysis for the Classical Singer

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Dedicated to all those who taught me to sing and make music,
especially my principal teachers: Lynn Blaser, Douglas Bodle,
Alan Bennett, Edith Wiens, and Margreet Honig.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who assisted me in the writing and publishing of this book. John Rink was very gracious to suggest appropriate resources to consult for the chapter on analysis. Margreet Honig and Judith Skelton-Green appropriately made me question my ideas about resonance and respiration. Most of all, thanks to Gunther Vandeven for his detailed suggestions during the course of writing the book and to John Pepper for going over the manuscript with a very fine-tooth comb.

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Settle the Score

Introduction

For any serious classical musician the score is of primary importance. Though we spend countless hours in the pursuit and practice of technical mastery, these skills ultimately are of little importance if we are unable to express written music accurately and sincerely. Indeed, it is the combination of technical proficiency and musical adeptness which is the mark of the finest and most successful singers.

While the title of this book may imply a focus on musicianship, the system for learning music presented here is, in fact, highly technical. Moreover, this technicality is twofold, as it embraces both vocal production and musical construction. A classical performer's principal aim should be to realize the composer's intentions as represented in the score and present this to an audience. Certainly musical performance may ultimately (or even should) involve personal interpretive and expressive choices; however, one must first commit to discovering the expression found in the combinations of phonemes, pitches, and rhythms provided by the composer.

In my work as a singer I have often been surprised at the inefficiency with which many of my colleagues approach or prepare a piece of music. In one extreme case you have the singer with a naturally beautiful voice who rarely performs a piece with musical accuracy. Alternatively you have the singer with strong musical skills who lacks the technical fortitude to realize his or her expressive aims. When there are faults, be they in musical accuracy or vocal production, clearly the singer has missed something in his or her preparation.

Whether a singer represents one of these extreme cases or something in between, it is clear that methods must be developed and employed to address and correct these tendencies. The purpose of this book is to lay a foundation for a practical and beneficial system of learning vocal music. What this system ultimately becomes for any singer will clearly depend on each individual's musical and technical abilities. Moreover, this system should be flexible to meet the ever-changing needs of each singer and the demands of a specific piece of music. Ultimately a singer should feel confident that he or she has full command of a work's technical and musical requirements. Only when these things have been achieved can one expect to communicate with an audience effectively.

Of all the books and articles I have read on vocal pedagogy, mechanics, and performance (and I have read a fair number), I have never come across a book devoted to the *how* of learning music – at least none that presents a thorough system that can be applied to the actual scores we come in contact with on a daily basis in our work. I hope, if nothing else, that this book can fill this gap in the literature. Of course, at best, I hope it will be a useful tool for singers in developing their own personal method of learning a score.

A note to teachers

Most people take singing lessons to learn how to sing. This in itself is a very broad concept, which can most simply be divided into a focus on technical and/or musical proficiency. Some make the distinction between voice teachers and coaches as people who focus predominantly on technique and music-making respectively. If the truth be told, the best teachers are concerned with both, though perhaps in varying degrees depending on the capabilities and developmental stages of their students.

A lot of teaching, particularly when working on repertoire, is rather impulsive: diagnosing and correcting faults as they appear while singing a piece. This is not necessarily a bad thing, especially with advanced students who already have a strong technical and musical foundation. That being said, when it is clear that a student lacks a solid foundation upon which to execute his or her singing, then it is the teacher's job to point out this deficiency and to aid the student in correcting it.

Ultimately, a teacher should hope that a student can teach him- or herself by developing an independence in the study and practice of music. Singing teachers lay the foundation for vocal production, but they should also instruct students in a systematic approach to learning music. This system should reinforce healthy technical execution, and ensure that the interpretation of the score is both accurate and expressive. This book is intended to present a specific system which aspires to this goal. Certainly there are many other means to study repertoire, and I do not claim that this system meets the needs of every student or teacher. Adapt what you will, add where you feel something is missing, and discard what you feel is unnecessary. Just as any singer must develop his or her own system of singing study, so too must every teacher develop his or her own method of instruction.

Technique and the warm-up

Though professional singers work their entire careers to perfect their vocal techniques, the fundamentals of efficient and healthy vocalism are the same as for the beginner. Countless books and articles discuss the structural functioning of the human voice and the development of a solid vocal technique, and do so in far greater detail than I shall here. It is my opinion that a serious singing pupil should spend a considerable time at the beginning of his or her training in the study and practice of various exercises to develop the muscular co-ordination required for efficient and healthy singing. Moreover, as careers and voices develop, singers should recognize (either individually or with the aid of a teacher) when certain training exercises should be revisited or newly learned.

The term 'warm-up' is so commonly used amongst singers and teachers that its meaning is often elusive. Many clearly feel the need and importance of warming up to be paramount, while others rarely bother or feel humming or singing a few notes in the shower will suffice. Some make the comparison of a singer's warm-up to that of an athlete; however, the muscular engagement involved in singing is minute compared to what the body deals with in sports. In truth, it is difficult to prove scientifically whether a singing warm-up benefits the functioning of a singing voice at all, as the possible warm-ups are as numerous and as varied as the subjective needs of each singer.

What singing does require is a rather complex co-ordination of muscles in the head, neck, and torso. This co-ordination is the essence of a solid singing technique, and this is what a vocal warm-up should reinforce. How, how long, and how often one warms up is clearly a subjective decision. Thus, one should clearly do whatever works best, whether this be regular vocal exercises or non-vocal visualization.

Too often singers warm up the voice absent-mindedly, employing the same exercises every day with little thought as to the purpose of the exercises or whether they still serve that purpose (or any purpose, for that matter). For this reason I would recommend that a warm-up focus on consciously emphasizing the muscular co-ordination required for singing. Moreover, I would suggest that the more methodical and consistent the warm-up is, the more reliable one's vocal technique will become.

This chapter is intended as an overview of the basics of vocal technique, and should serve rather as a review of what one already knows than as the basis for actually learning how to sing. I present various ideas which one can draw from in developing a vocal warm-up. The point is not the execution of specific exercises, but rather an awareness and practice of the varied muscular co-ordination required in all singing.

My main aim is to demonstrate that vocal technique can and should be based in concrete principles felt physically by the singer. Though I do not reject the value of imagery or metaphor in certain contexts, it is also clear that focusing solely on such methods is often

confusing for a singer, and can unnecessarily complicate vocal instruction – especially if taken from a book outside the context of private study.

My discourse will be divided into four sections, each beginning with a basic description of good technique in that category. Subsequently, I should like to offer a few concepts to assist singers in solidifying a vocal technique, as mentioned above, through a regular warm-up. It should be kept in mind that each of these four sections (posture, breathing, vowel-formation, and resonance) are interdependent, and should never be addressed too long in isolation; effective vocal technique is, after all, the co-ordination of several functions within the body.

In subsequent chapters I shall often reiterate or elaborate some of the points I make here as a means of explaining and justifying the various exercises that I suggest. Moreover, in Appendix 4 I have included an annotated bibliography that lists more comprehensive and detailed works on the subject, and works which I would encourage any serious singer or vocal teacher to consult.

When discussing specific vowels and consonants later in this section I use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols in square brackets. The full chart of the IPA symbols is found in Appendix 1.

Posture

Posture, as I will discuss it, means two things: the posture of the whole body, and that of the vocal tract. Beginning with the posture of the whole body, I should like to consider two types: that while standing and that while sitting.

Generally speaking, one's lower back should be relatively flat, and one's sternum in a comfortably high position. Efficient sitting posture can be either with one's back against the chair (depending on the chair), or sitting at the front of one's chair. Whilst sitting, I advocate placing one foot in front of the other, the back foot even slightly under the chair. One should then lean slightly forward, placing some of the body's weight on the front foot. Aside from maintaining or even increasing attentiveness, sitting at the front of one's chair, as described above, can also improve breathing, as will be explained below.

Standing posture maintains the above principles; however, maintaining a flat lower back and high sternum can become problematic. Feet should be about shoulder-width apart, and knees should not be locked. When one's feet are parallel, often one's lower back arches slightly. To correct this, one may consciously think of placing more weight on the balls of the feet, and tilting the pelvis somewhat to flatten the back. Also possible, and rather more effective, is to stand with one foot in front of the other (considerably less distance, however, than while sitting). This allows a rather relaxed and dynamic posture, and the back generally flattens of its own accord.

I have mentioned the position of the sternum, which is often a source of confusion for singers, and often disputed amongst pedagogues as well. The easiest and most effective way of finding this position is simply to put one's hands directly over the head. One can then bring the hands down slowly to the sides, consciously maintaining the position of the upper torso. Such an exercise can also affect the position of the head, which should basically rest comfortably on the spine. The head and neck are the main culprits in technical faults. There is commonly a tendency to stick the head out, often accompanied by a raised chin, especially in high ranges. While the optimal angle of the head is different for each individual, the spine should always remain in proper alignment, with the neck muscles relaxed sufficiently so that one is capable of moving the head from side to side, and even slightly up and down. Also, in extreme ranges, the jaw often tightens and pushes forward. Relaxation exercises of moving the jaw slightly from side to side can help to fix this, as can occasionally singing with an overbite to exaggerate the sensation of having the top part of the face further forward than the jaw and chin. For improving one's awareness of proper posture, perhaps the best option is to take some lessons in Alexander Technique. This technique is based on the construction of the skeleton, and while promoting a minimum of muscular tension to support the body, it is also effective in increasing one's energy – both excellent components of good singing.

The vocal tract, when the rest of the body is well aligned, will basically be in an appropriate position to produce a healthy and efficient vocal tone. The positions of two parts of the vocal tract, however, are famous (or, better, infamous) amongst the discussions of vocal pedagogues. The phrases 'Lower the larynx' and 'Raise the soft palate' are the most commonly heard, and both ask the singer to bring under direct control parts of the vocal tract that are mostly affected by surrounding muscle groups. The proper position of the larynx during singing ought to be close to that of the larynx at rest, that is, neither elevated nor depressed. A depressed larynx, as happens when one yawns, is a component of certain vocal techniques; however, these techniques have been proven to limit technical facility in certain ways, and even to damage the voice when practised for extended periods of time. Professional singers occasionally do have to address the position of the soft palate when dealing with certain details of vocal tone, such as nasality or vibrato rate. Generally speaking, though, correct posture does most of the work where the soft palate is concerned, and external visual cues of the face – raising eyebrows, lifting cheekbones, or smiling – are often more effective than trying to manipulate a rather obscure and complicated area in the roof of the mouth.

Breathing and breath-support

Breathing, being the motor behind the voice, can lead to numerous technical faults if not done efficiently and properly. Inhalation should generally be inaudible. The upper torso should remain still (assuming that one's sternum is already in the high position described above), and the area below the ribcage should expand, mostly at the sides and in the front, though expansion also occurs in the back. The term 'support' best describes the movement that ensues in the lower torso when air leaving the lungs turns into pitched sounds in the larynx (phonation). As phonation begins, the lower torso should maintain the expanded position of

inhalation. During the course of phonation as more air leaves the lungs, the lower torso must decrease in size; however, a certain degree of muscular antagonism must occur so that the flow of air through the larynx remains steady, neither too slow nor too fast. While there are differences of opinion regarding this abdominal muscle work, the most effective method, in my opinion, is to try and maintain a lateral expansion while the frontal abdominal area slowly moves inward (this being a result of natural airflow, rather than a conscious contraction of the lower abdominal muscles). Such a method of support not only assists in the steady flow of air, but also results in a longer period of exhalation.

To correct and improve one's breathing technique requires some rudimentary groundwork. Firstly, one must be convinced that the air being breathed, though in reality entering the lungs, is felt in the abdomen. Lying horizontally on one's back and breathing normally shows this to a certain extent. An effective exercise is to sit on a chair with the feet a little more than shoulder-width apart, forearms resting on the thighs, and hands loosely hanging between the knees. One should then relax the entire upper torso, neck and head, and then breathe normally. While breathing normally, if the exercise is done correctly, one will very quickly and rather intensely feel movement only in the lower abdominal region. This should be kept in mind constantly as a natural phenomenon (while breathing with upper chest expansion, though frequent amongst singers, is not). By sitting in a similar position, but now with the elbows on the thighs and the chin resting on one's hands, one can notice more acutely the expansion of the back during inhalation also. To feel the engagement of the sides during inhalation, one can sit or stand with good posture (note how the gentle lean forward while sitting is useful) and place one's thumbs and forefingers on the sides, just under the ribcage.

After acknowledging the outward expansion of the lower torso during inhalation, one should attempt to maintain that outward expansion during exhalation, generally on a voiceless fricative such as [s] or [f]. A gentle pinch on the sides under the ribcage, though useful in first understanding the concept of support, can cause tension in the upper body, and thus ought to be used sparingly; thereafter, the lateral expansion should be maintained consciously. A further possibility for engaging with the lower body during respiration is to slouch back in one's chair, the entire upper body relaxed. In this position, as with the relaxed position leaning over the knees, the lower body movement is very noticeable; also, in this posture one can easily address issues of tension in the upper body that may interfere with the sought-after sensation.

An important aspect of breathing is what takes place between inhalation and phonation. The onset of a note is often problematic, and this is generally due to a closing of the larynx immediately before phonation begins. This is often of linguistic necessity in German or English when a word begins with a vowel, or used as an expressive tool; however, it should be used sparingly. The problem arises because people habitually close their larynx as a means of holding their breath (perhaps best evidenced when lifting a heavy object). This places a great deal of pressure on the larynx, and generally results in an excess release of air at the beginning of phonation. To rectify this, one must learn the concept of 'breath-suspension', which takes place in the period of time between inhalation and exhalation and generally seeks to maintain the open position of the larynx. Rapid panting, both audible and inaudible, is useful for this,

and also helps with the feeling of breathing in the abdomen. Another excellent exercise (and one that also assists in increasing breath capacity and control in general) is a system involving equal lengths of inhalation, suspension, and exhalation. The important point during this process is to prevent the larynx from closing; air is retained in the body through engagement of the abdominal muscles, not through the closure of the vocal folds. This exaggeration of the breath cycle is essential for correctly understanding the concept of 'onset' and preventing the 'glottal attack' which can severely affect the subsequent tone.*

Vowel-formation

The majority of singing takes place on vowels, and while consonants are obviously necessary for textual intelligibility, correct understanding of vowel-formation is essential to good singing. Vowels are formed chiefly by the position of the tongue, and for this reason one should strive to maintain a comfortable and relaxed mouth position at all times (only moving the lips and jaw when necessitated by rounded vowels and consonants). Furthermore, the tip of the tongue should be in gentle contact with the back of the lower teeth during all vowels except [u] (and then only slightly back from the teeth).

The ease or difficulty with which singers produce specific vowels is highly subjective and often reflects a tendency to pronounce certain vowels more or less accurately. That being said, amongst singers in general some vowels are more commonly pronounced incorrectly than others. A common error in amateur and professional singers alike is a lack of distinction between 'related' vowels, by which I mean vowels that are distinguished only slightly in their formation (see the vowel-formation chart in Appendix 1). These vowels are often described as 'closed' or 'open', and the most problematic pairs are [e]/[ɛ] and [i]/[I]. The difference in position of the tongue is quite small between 'related' vowels and one must spend considerable time practicing these differences so that the correct vowel is always utilized.

Although vowels are formed mainly with the tongue, the lips are required for [o] and [u], and for some of the French and German vowels ([y], [Y], [ø], [œ] etc.). The most important point here is that the rounding of the lips should not be accompanied by tension either in the lips or in the jaw; also, the lower jaw should not protrude outwards. Again, employing a slight overbite in practice can help release tension, as can the occasional use of a lip trill, which cannot be performed when there is tension in the mouth.

One further point regarding vowels is the concept of 'vowel-modification'. Some believe that higher pitches in one's range require more space in the vocal tract to maintain a pleasing tone; however, this modification (if necessary at all) is frequently much smaller than such people suppose. The basic principle behind modification is to open the mouth only a little on whichever vowel is being sung, not to actually change the vowel itself (except in very extreme circumstances where the sound would otherwise sound shrill).

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* This exercise is included in 'Breath Management Exercises without Phonation' in Richard Miller's *The Structure of Singing* (see Appendix 4), p. 31.

Consonant-formation and resonance

Discussion of resonance or 'placement' of the voice can be a rather complicated matter, and is in some ways redundant, as the voice will inevitably resonate well if one's posture, breathing, and vowel-formation are healthy and efficient. The terms 'head' and 'chest' are used frequently in connection with the terms 'voice' and 'resonance', even though such word-combinations are in many ways misleading. Phonation begins in the larynx and (from a physiological/acoustic perspective) a singer can only affect resonance in the subsequent spaces in the body through which sound can travel (the vocal tract). That being said, certain functions within the larynx can influence the sound to begin with, and these generally relate to the amount of subglottal air pressure and laryngeal posture. Phonation can be discussed in terms of 'heavy' or 'pressed' at one extreme, and 'light' or 'breathy' at the other. 'Flow' (somewhere in between the two) is the healthiest sort of phonation, allowing the greatest vocal facility with the least strain on the vocal folds. The concepts of posture and breathing described above seek to produce and support this method of sound-production.

The terms 'chest' and 'head' most likely entered the pedagogical vocabulary in reference to the sympathetic vibrations felt in these areas as a result of 'heavy' and 'flow' phonation respectively. Terminological confusion aside, 'chest' and 'head' do point to the sympathetic vibrations that are so important in learning how to sing. 'Mask' is another term often used when discussing 'flow' phonation and it generally refers to those parts of the face where sensations and/or vibrations occur when the vocal tract is serving as a good resonator (i.e. the vocal tract, which is not felt directly, is doing the resonating, whereas the 'mask' is sympathetically vibrating in response). Though the aim is for the voice to resonate well on the sustained vowels, consonants are the best tool for discovering this resonance in the first place, and then incorporating good resonance into the majority of vocal sounds. In the section on breathing (pp. 7-9), voiceless fricatives were mentioned as a great aid in improving the steadiness of airflow for phonation. In regards to resonance, nasals and voiced fricatives are the most helpful.

Nasal resonance is best described as sensations felt in the nose and on either side of the nose, and these can be felt by singing on [m], [n], and [ŋ]. When singing on nasal consonants, one can lightly touch both the sides of the nose and the area below the eyes to feel the vibrations. One thing to keep in mind, however, is that overuse of nasal consonants in seeking resonance may result in an overly nasal tone. An easy tool for checking that this is not the case is by simply pinching the nose closed on a vowel to ensure that the sensations and/or tone do not change. Also, excessive nasality could be due to faults in posture or breathing affecting the position of the soft palate.

Voiced fricatives are another excellent way to improve resonance, and generally they do not lead to nasality. All voiced fricatives are useful, and one can feel the sensations they create by placing one's fingertips lightly on the forehead. The only issue with voiced fricatives is that, when accompanied by certain tensions, they can sound almost as 'mixed consonants' with their unvoiced equivalent (i.e. [z]/[s], [v]/[f], [ð]/[θ]).

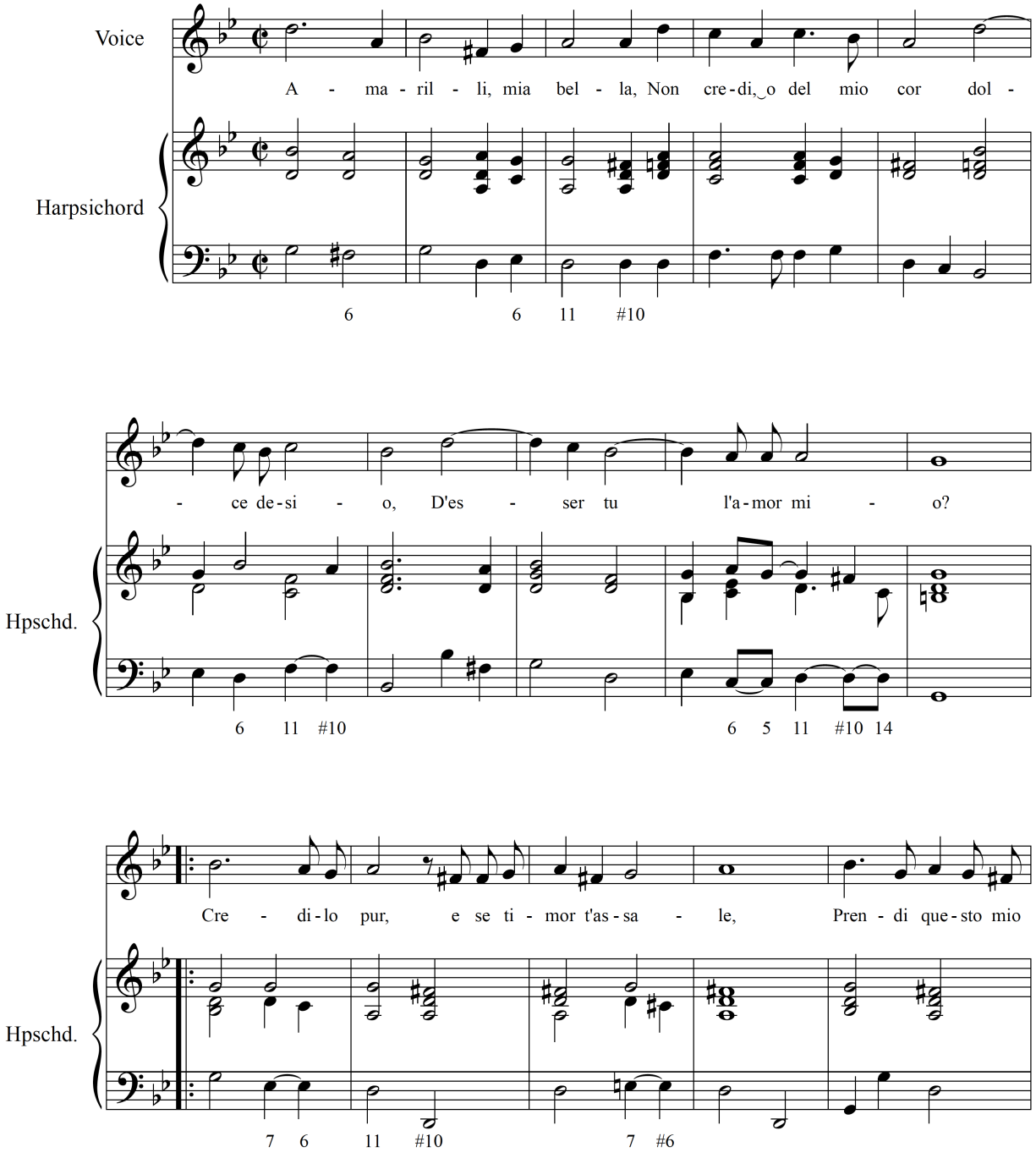
Stop or plosive consonants, especially those involving the tip of the tongue and lips ([p], [b], [t], [d]), can assist in keeping sensations out of the throat while singing, as can the liquid [l] and the glide [j]. The other stop consonants ([k], [g]) can also help with the forward sensation of sound by helping to relax tension at the back of the tongue. These plosives do not create the same continual sensations as the nasals and voiced fricatives discussed above; however, they are useful in maintaining sensations in the mask, even if only briefly.

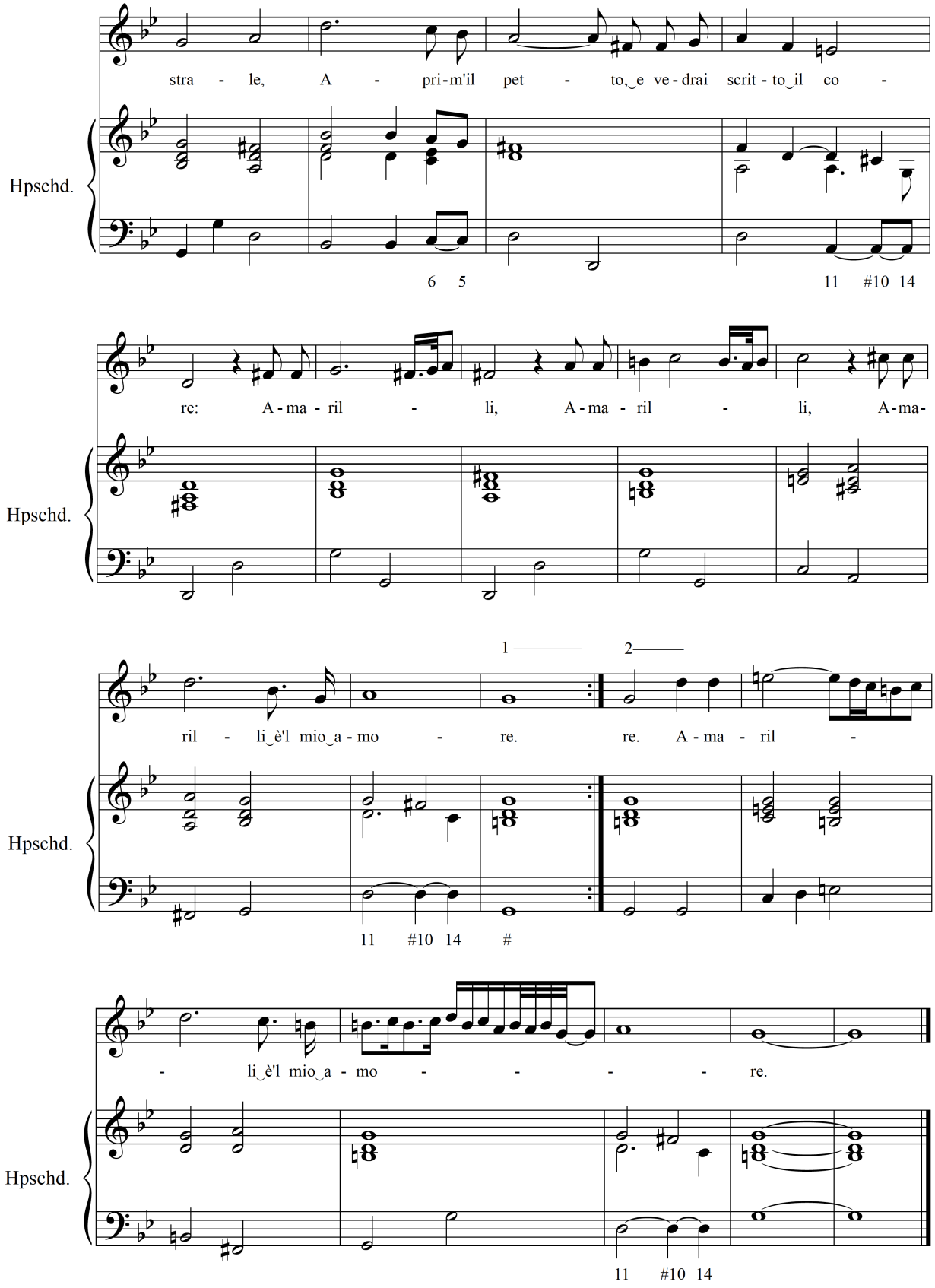
Deconstructive analysis

The scores

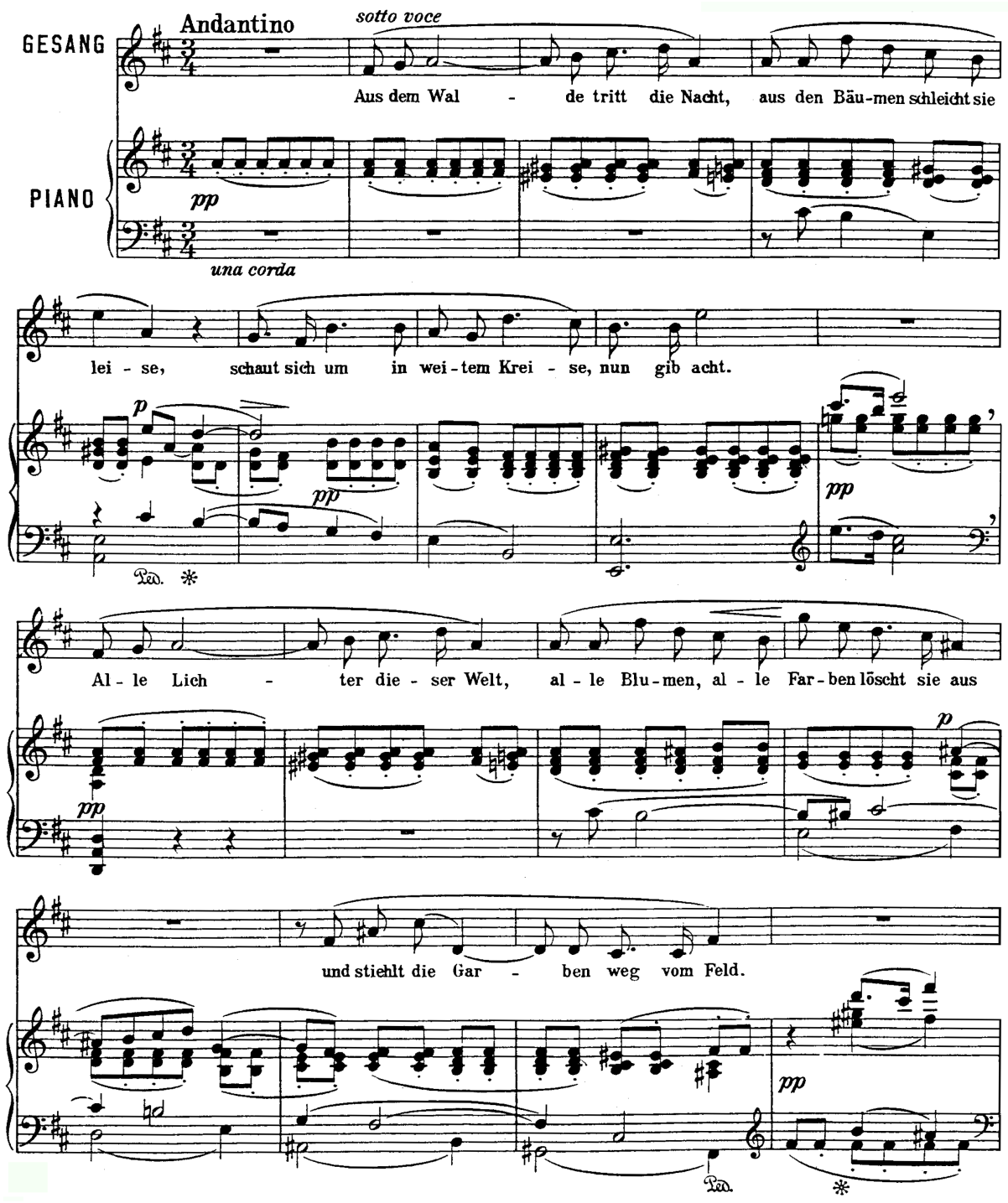
Throughout this book I will use three pieces of music as a means of illustrating my approach to learning music. Before starting the process I should first like to present the scores in their entirety.

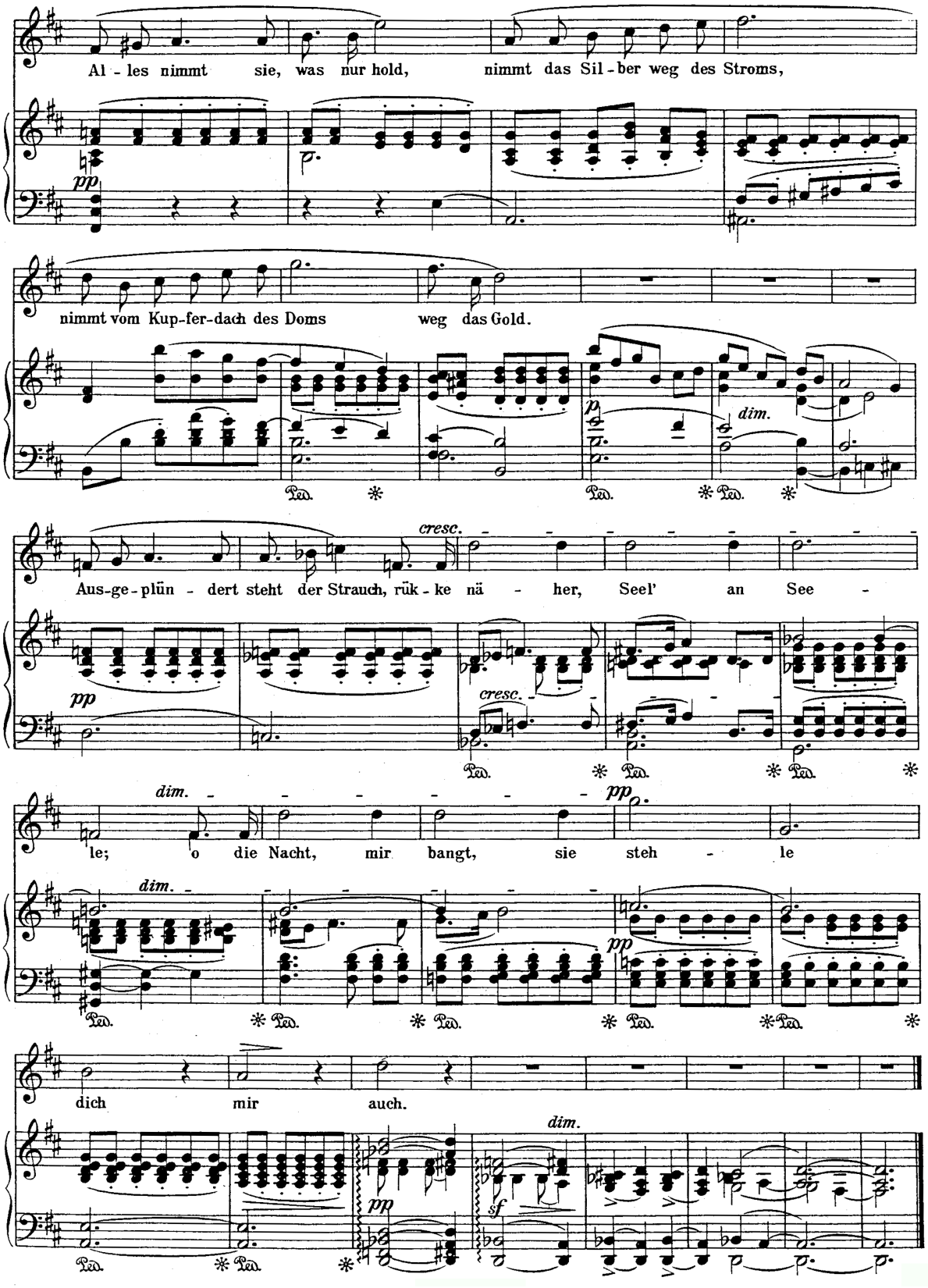
Example 1 Amarilli, mia bella (from *Le nuove musiche*) Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)



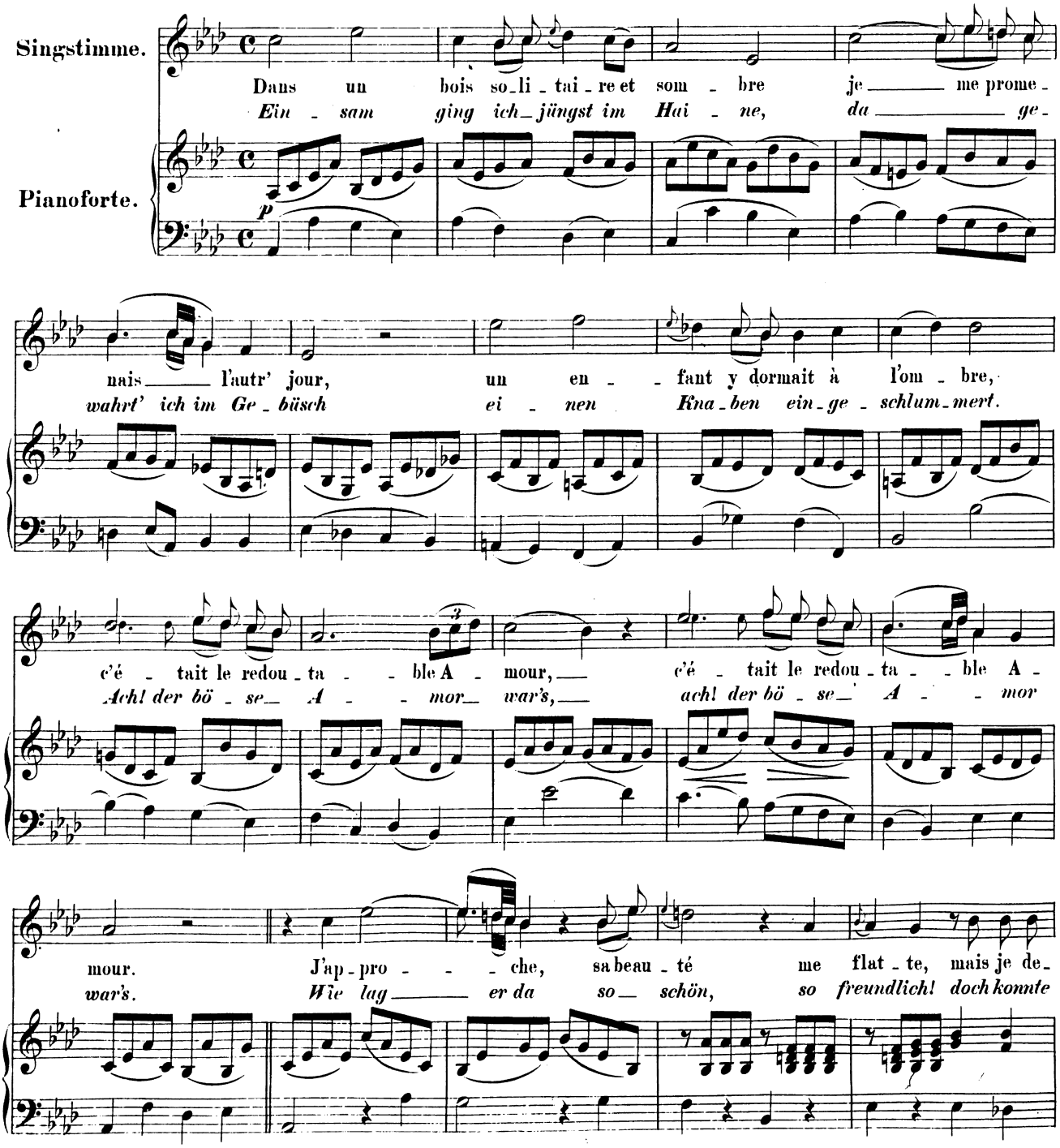

stra - le, A - pri-m'il pet - to, e ve-drai scrit-to il co -
Hpschd.
6 5
11 #10 14
re: A-ma-ril - li, A-ma-ril - li, A-ma-
Hpschd.
1
2
ril - li è'l mio a-mo - re. re. A-ma-ril -
Hpschd.
11 #10 14 #
- li è'l mio a-mo - - - - re.
Hpschd.
11 #10 14

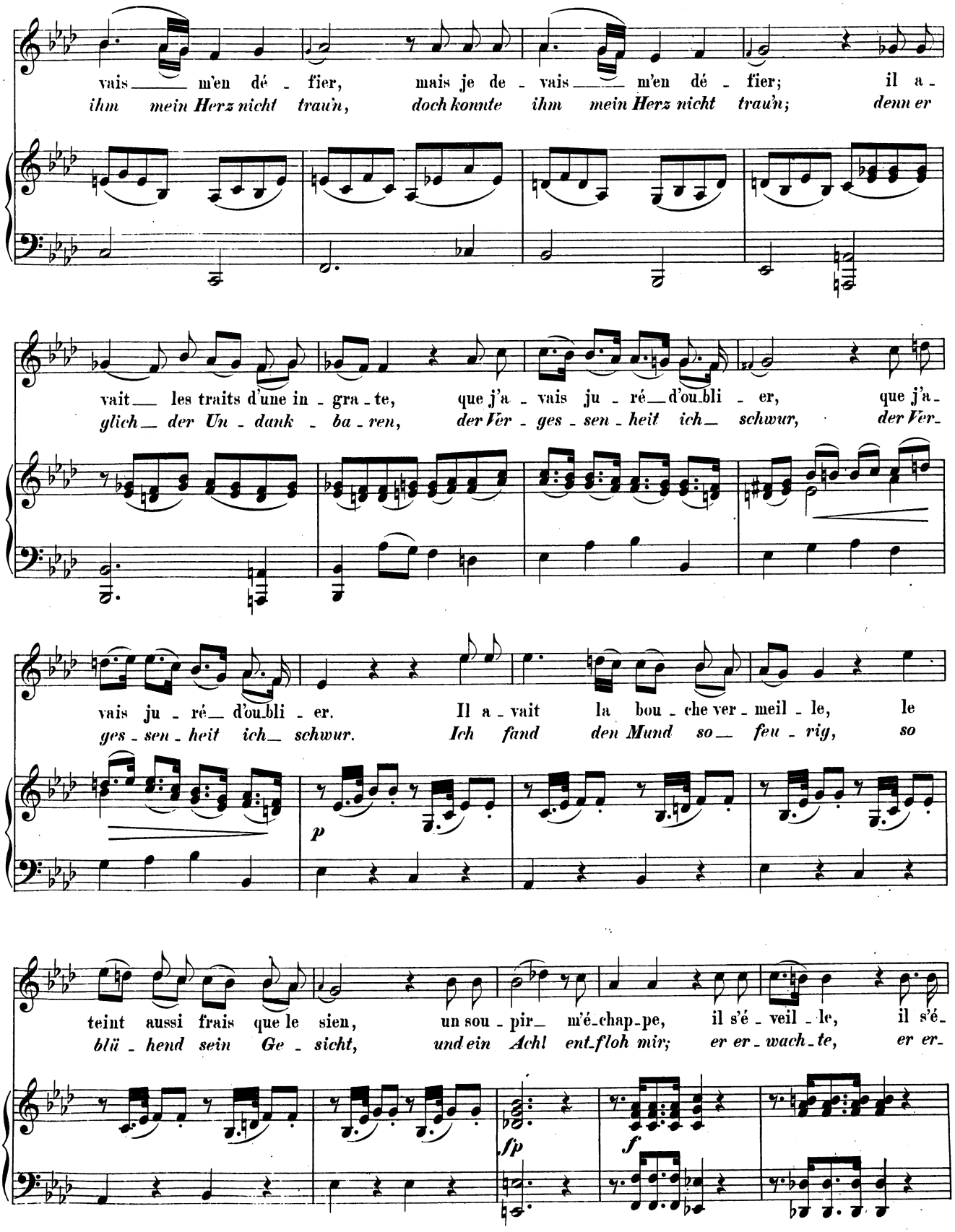
Example 2 Die Nacht (Op. 10, No. 3) Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

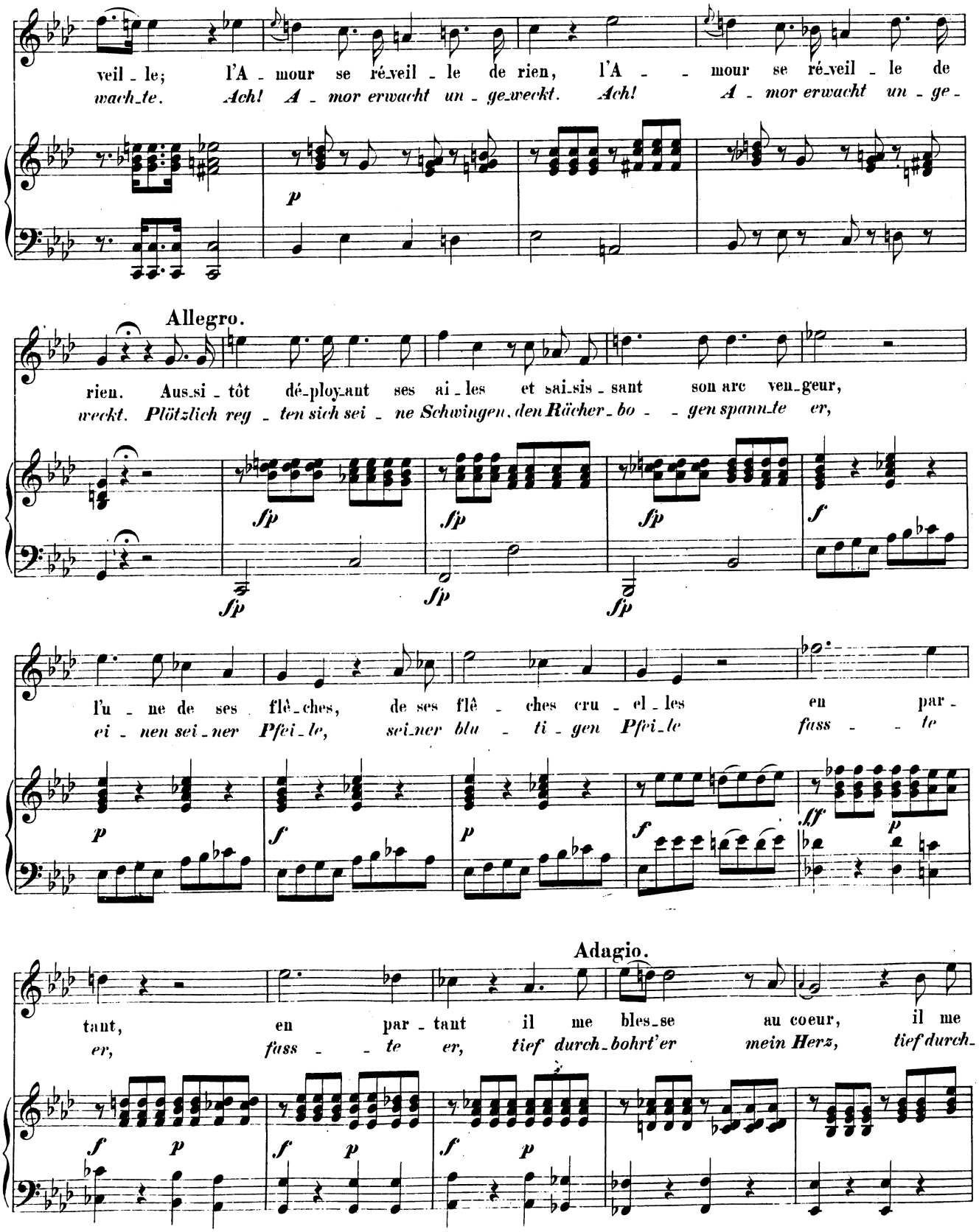


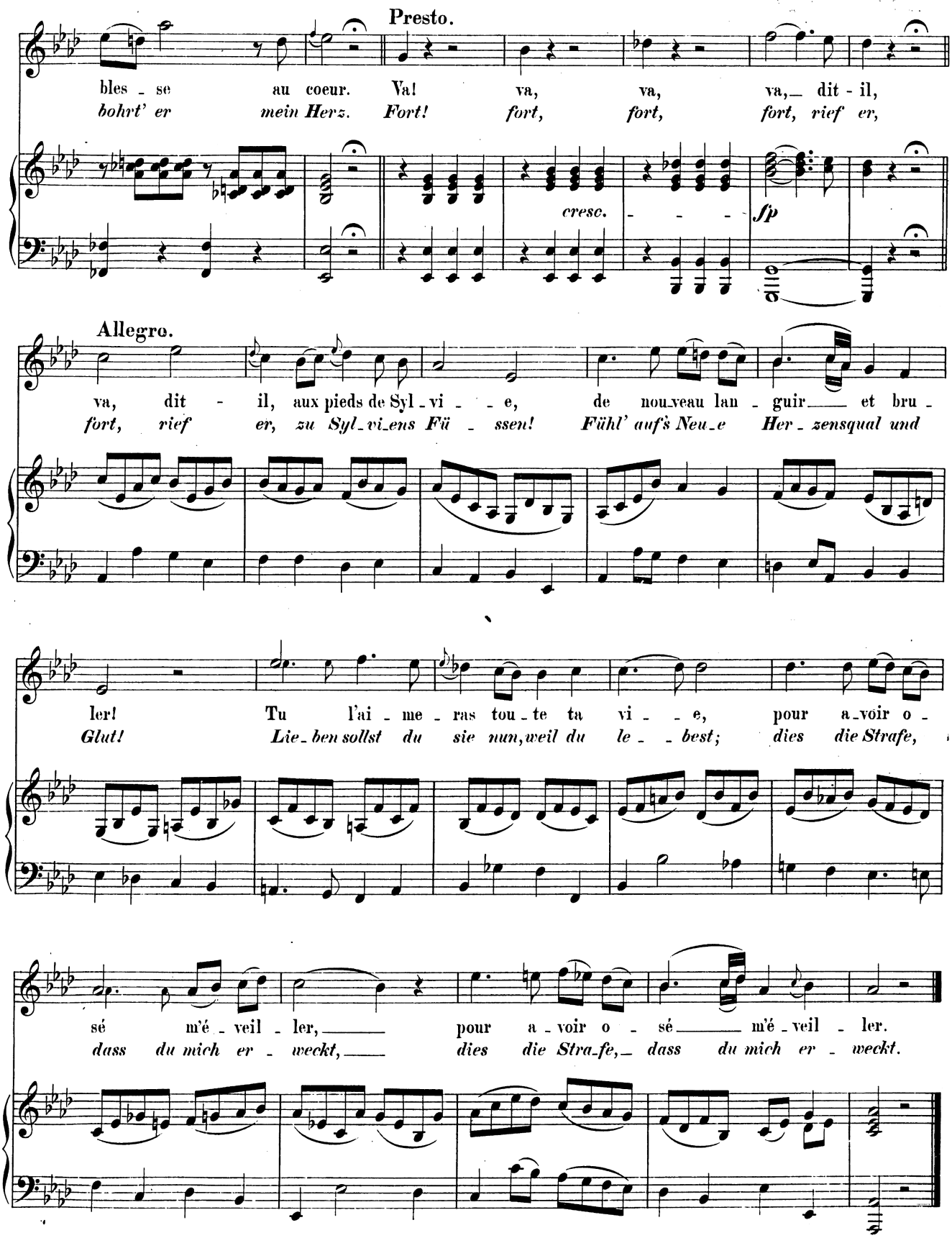

Al - les nimmt sie, was nur hold, nimmt das Sil - ber weg des Stroms,
nimmt vom Kup-fer-dach des Doms weg das Gold.
Aus-ge-plün - dert steht der Strauch, rük - ke nä - her, Seel' an See -
le; o die Nacht, mir bangt, sie steh - le
dich mir auch.
pp
p
dim.
cresc.
sf
Ped.

Example 3 **Dans un bois solitaire (KV 295b)** **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**




vais m'en dé - fier, mais je de - vais m'en dé - fier; il a -
ihm mein Herz nicht trau'n, doch konnte ihm mein Herz nicht trau'n; denn er
vait les traits d'une in - gra - te, que j'a - vais ju - ré d'ou-bli - er, que j'a -
glich der Un - dank - ba - ren, der Ver - ges - sen - heit ich schwur, der Ver -
vais ju - ré d'ou-bli - er. Il a - vait la bou - che ver - meil - le, le
ges - sen - heit ich schwur. Ich fand den Mund so feu - rig, so
p
teint aussi frais que le sien, un sou - pir m'é-chap-pe, il s'é - veil - le, il s'é -
blü - hend sein Ge - sicht, und ein Ach! ent-floh mir; er er - wach - te, er er -
sfp
f


veil - le; l'A - mour se ré-veil - le de rien, l'A - - mour se ré-veil - le de
wach-te. Ach! A - mor erwacht un - ge-weckt. Ach! A - mor erwacht un - ge -
p
Allegro.
rien. Aus-si - tôt dé-ploy-ant ses ai - les et sai-sis - sant son arc ven-geur,
weckt. Plötzlich reg - ten sich sei - ne Schwingen, den Rächer - bo - - gen spann-te er,
sfp
sfp
sfp
sfp
sfp
f
l'u - ne de ses flè-ches, de ses flè - ches cru - el - les en par -
ei - nen sei-ner Pfei-le, sei-ner blu - ti - gen Pfei-le fass - - te
p
f
p
f
sf
p
Adagio.
tant, en par - tant il me bles-se au coeur, il me
er, fass - - te er, tief durch-bohrt'er mein Herz, tief durch-
f p
f p
f p


Presto.
bles - se au coeur. Va! va, va, va,_ dit - il,
bohrt' er mein Herz. Fort! fort, fort, fort, rief er,
cresc.
fp
Allegro.
va, dit - il, aux pieds de Syl - vi - - e, de nou-veau lan - guir___ et bru -
fort, rief er, zu Syl-vi-ens Fü - ssen! Fühl' auf's Neu-e Her - zensqual und
ler! Tu l'ai - me - ras tou - te ta vi - - e, pour a-voir o -
Glut! Lie-ben sollst du sie nun, weil du le - - best; dies die Strafe,
sé m'é - veil - ler,___ pour a - voir o - sé___ m'é - veil - ler.
dass du mich er - weckt,___ dies die Stra-fe,_ dass du mich er - weckt.

Preparation

There are a few steps which can be taken to learn a score best which may not even involve looking at the music. These are some very mundane tasks in relation to the sung text which may often seem unnecessary, but may ultimately assist with the learning process along the way. Even if one is singing in his or her native language, having a concept of a text's original genesis and meaning and precise details on accurate pronunciation will inevitably be of some assistance.

Transcribe the text

These days there is no shortage of websites where one can find the text of a piece. While it is perhaps more expedient to simply copy and paste texts into a text file when they are available, one can often learn a lot about a composer's setting by transcribing (either by hand or typing) the complete text directly from the score. If you have easy access to the original text online or in the preface of a score's edition, you should note where the composer repeats or even alters the text. Keep this transcription of the text with the score, or combine it with your translation and/or transliteration described below.

Translate the text

Just as one should have a version of the original text on hand, so should one have a translation which he or she can consult apart from the music. A literal translation serves the purpose of understanding the meaning of every word and gaining an appreciation for syntax in a foreign language. Moreover, this can easily be transferred into the score itself. On the other hand, a poetic translation can assist with your own appreciation of a text's poetry and meaning.

Transliteration of text into International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

One of the hallmarks of a great singer is excellent diction. In today's professional world it is often a requirement to sing in multiple languages, and often in a language in which one does not have expertise or fluency. It may be true that certain nuances of a language will only be realized in singing when one can realize them in speech; however, the importance of such nuances in singing is secondary to precision in vowel- and consonant-formation and inherent word stress.

Many singers adapt their own systems for learning how to pronounce foreign languages with reference to equivalent sounds in their native language. Certainly this seems most practical; however, it does not assist when the foreign language utilizes a sound that does not exist in the native tongue, nor does it clarify the pronunciation of words in the singer's own language. For this reason, comprehension and use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is clearly

an advantage. Not only does IPA give the singer an immediate reference point for the vowel or consonant that is required and indeed its accurate production, but it also serves to facilitate professional work where pronunciation is being discussed by more than one person.

I will be using the IPA continually throughout this book in my explanations and examples. Making a full IPA transliteration of a piece's text may be tedious and unnecessary, particularly when one has a strong understanding of a language's rules for pronunciation. At the same time, it is surprising how even native speakers of a language make pronunciation errors or are unable to explain to someone else specifically which vowels and consonants a particular word employs. Thus, while I will not insist that a full IPA transliteration is a necessity, being able to model and explain the accurate pronunciation of any sung word certainly is.

Example 4 Amarilli, mia bella **Author uncertain, possibly Guarini**
Text, Transliteration, Translation

Text	IPA transliteration
Amarilli, mia bella, Non credi, o del mio cor dolce desio, D'esser tu l'amor mio? Credilo pur, e se timor t'assale, Prendi questo mio strale, Aprimi il petto e vedrai scritto il core: Amarilli è il mio amore.	a ma ril: li mia bɛl: la non kre dio del mio kɔr dol tʃe de zi o dɛs: ser tu la mor mi o kre di lo pur e se ti mor tas: sa le prɛn di kwe sto mio stra le a pri mil pɛt: to e ve drai skrit: toil kɔ re a ma ril: li ɛil mioa mo re

Literal translation	Poetic translation
Amaryllis, my beautiful (one) not (do you) believe, O of my heart sweet desire, of being (to be) you the love my? Believe still, and if fear you assails, take this my arrow, open to me the breast and you will see written (in) the heart: Amaryllis is the my love	Amaryllis, my beauty, do you not believe, O sweet desire of my heart, that you are my beloved? But do believe it, and if fear assails you, take this arrow of mine and open my bosom, and you will see written on my heart: Amaryllis is my love.

Example 5 Die Nacht Hermann von Gilm zu Rosenegg (1812-1864)
Text, Transliteration, Translation

Text	IPA transliteration
Aus dem Walde tritt die Nacht, aus den Bäumen schleicht sie leise, schaut sich um in weitem Kreise, nun gib acht. Alle Lichter dieser Welt, alle Blumen, alle Farben löscht sie aus und stiehlt die Garben weg vom Feld. Alles nimmt sie, was nur hold, nimmt das Silber weg des Stroms, nimmt vom Kupferdach des Doms weg das Gold. Ausgeplündert steht der Strauch, rükke näher, Seel' an Seele; o die Nacht, mir bangt, sie stehle dich mir auch.	aʊs dem val də trIt di naxt aʊs den bɔY mən ʃlaIçt zi laI zə ʃaʊt zIç ʊm In vaI təm kraI zə nu:n gip axt al: lə lIç tər di zər vɛlt al: lə blu mən al: lə far bən lœʃt zi aʊs ʊnt ʃtilt di gar bən vɛk fɔm fɛlt al: ləs nImt zi vas nu:r hɔlt nImt das zIl bər vɛk dɛs ʃtroms nImt fɔm kʊp fər dax dɛs do:ms vɛk das gɔlt aʊs gə plYn dərt ʃte:t der ʃtraʊx rYk: kə nɛ: ər ze:l an ze: lə o di naxt mir baŋt zi ʃte: lə dIç mir aʊx

Literal translation	Poetic translation
Out of the woods steps the night, out of the trees sneaks/creeps it quietly, looks itself around in a wide circle, now be careful. All lights of this world, all flowers, all colours erases it and steals the sheaves away from the field. All takes it, that only lovely (is), takes the silver of the stream, takes from the copper roof of the cathedral away the gold. Plundered stands the shrub, draw nearer, soul to soul; oh the night, me it frightens, it steals you from me also.	Night steps out of the woods, and sneaks softly out of the trees, looks about in a wide circle, now beware. All the lights of this earth, all flowers, all colours it extinguishes, and steals the sheaves from the field. It takes everything that is dear, takes the silver from the stream, takes from the cathedral's copper roof away the gold. The shrubs stand plundered, draw nearer, soul to soul; oh, I fear the night will also steal you from me.

Example 6 Dans un bois solitaire Antoine Houdart de la Motte (1672-1731)
Text, Transliteration, Translation

Text	IPA transliteration
Dans un bois solitaire et sombre Je me promenais l'autr' jour, Un enfant y dormait à l'ombre, C'était le redoutable Amour.	dã zœ̃ bwa sɔ li tɛ re sõ brə ʒə mə prɔ mə nɛ lotr ʒur œ̃ nã fã i dɔr mɛ ta lõ brə se tɛ lə rə du ta bl(ə)a mur
J'approche, sa beauté me flatte, Mais je devais m'en défier; J'y vis tous les traits d'une ingrate, [Il avait les traits d'une ingrate,] Que j'avais juré d'oublier.	ʒa prɔ ʃə sa bo te mə fla tə mɛ ʒə də vɛ mã de fje ʒi vi tu lɛ trɛ dy nɛ̃ gra tə i la vɛ lɛ trɛ dy nɛ̃ gra tə kə ʒa vɛ ʒy re du bli e
Il avait la bouche vermeille, Le teint aussi frais que le sien, Un soupir m'échappe, il s'éveille; L'Amour se réveille de rien.	i la vɛ la bu ʃə vɛr mɛ jə lə tɛ̃ o si frɛ kə lə sjɛ̃ œ̃ su pir me ʃap: pə il se vɛ jə la mur sə re vɛ jə də rjɛ̃
Aussitôt déployant ses aîles Et saisissant son arc vengeur, D'une de ses flêches cruelles [L'une de ses flêches cruelles] En partant il me blesse au coeur.	o si to de plwa jã sɛ zɛ lə e sɛ zi sã sɔ̃ nark vã ʒœr dy nə də sɛ flɛ ʃə kry ɛ lə ly nə də sɛ flɛ ʃə kry ɛ lə ã par tã il mə blɛ so kœr
Va! va, dit-il, aux pieds de Sylvie, De nouveau languir et brûler! Tu l'aimeras toute ta vie, Pour avoir osé m'éveiller.	va va di til o pje də sil vi ə də nu vo lã gir e bry le ty lɛ mə ra tu tə ta vi ə pu ra vwa ro ze me vɛ je

Literal translation	Poetic translation
In a wood lonely and dark I walked the other day: a child there slept in the shade, it was the dreaded Cupid. I approach, his beauty me flatters, but I have to defy myself of it. I there saw all the features of an ingrate, that I had sworn to forget. He had the mouth ruby, the complexion equally fresh as hers. A sigh from me escapes, he wakes up: Cupid wakes from nothing. Immediately spreading his wings and seizing his bow vengeful, of one of his arrows cruel in parting he me wounds in the heart. Go, says he, at the feet of Sylvia, again to languish and to burn: you her will love all your life, for having dared me to awaken.	In a lonely and sombre forest I walked the other day; a child slept in the shade, it was the dreaded Cupid. I approach; his beauty fascinates me. But I must be careful: he has the traits of the faithless maiden whom I had sworn to forget. He had lips of ruby, His complexion was as beautiful as hers. A sigh escapes me and he awakes; Cupid wakes at nothing. Immediately opening his wings and seizing his vengeful bow, with one of his cruel arrows as he parts he wounds me to the heart. ‘Go!’ he says, ‘go languish and burn anew at Sylvia’s feet! You shall love her all your life, for having dared awaken me.’

Score-marking and learning the notes

If the score is seen as a tool of transmission between the composer and the performer (as discussed in the final chapter of this book), then the act of score-marking may be seen as an extension of the score itself. This is not to say that the score requires additions or alterations (though errors and omissions often do exist), but rather that we as musicians want to amplify or annotate specific details of the score visually to acknowledge or heighten our awareness of them. In this sense score-marking is a tool to assist us with reading notation. The degree to which someone marks his or her score depends in large part on the level at which one reads music, that is, how quickly the graphic representation of music can be translated into physical sound. For singers, this refers predominantly to the accurate singing of pitches, rhythms, and texts. On a more sophisticated level this also means adapting to stylistic conventions of a specific period or director, and recognizing the relationship of one's part to additional voices or instruments.

Certainly any first step in realizing a score vocally should be the accurate execution of the mechanics of a piece, by which I mean the combination of pitches, rhythms, and text. Though details of expression and interpretation can often facilitate vocal execution of a piece, in the early stages it is precision which is of the utmost importance. How quickly one is able to learn the mechanics of a piece is certainly very subjective and depends largely on one's musical upbringing, training, and experience. In my opinion, every singer should have the means and ability to learn the mechanics of a piece on his or her own. Under no circumstances should one depend on listening to recordings or working with a coach to learn the mechanics of a piece. The level of theoretical, musical, and keyboard skills required to accurately learn a vocal line is minimal and should certainly be amongst the skills of any serious singer.

Text-analysis

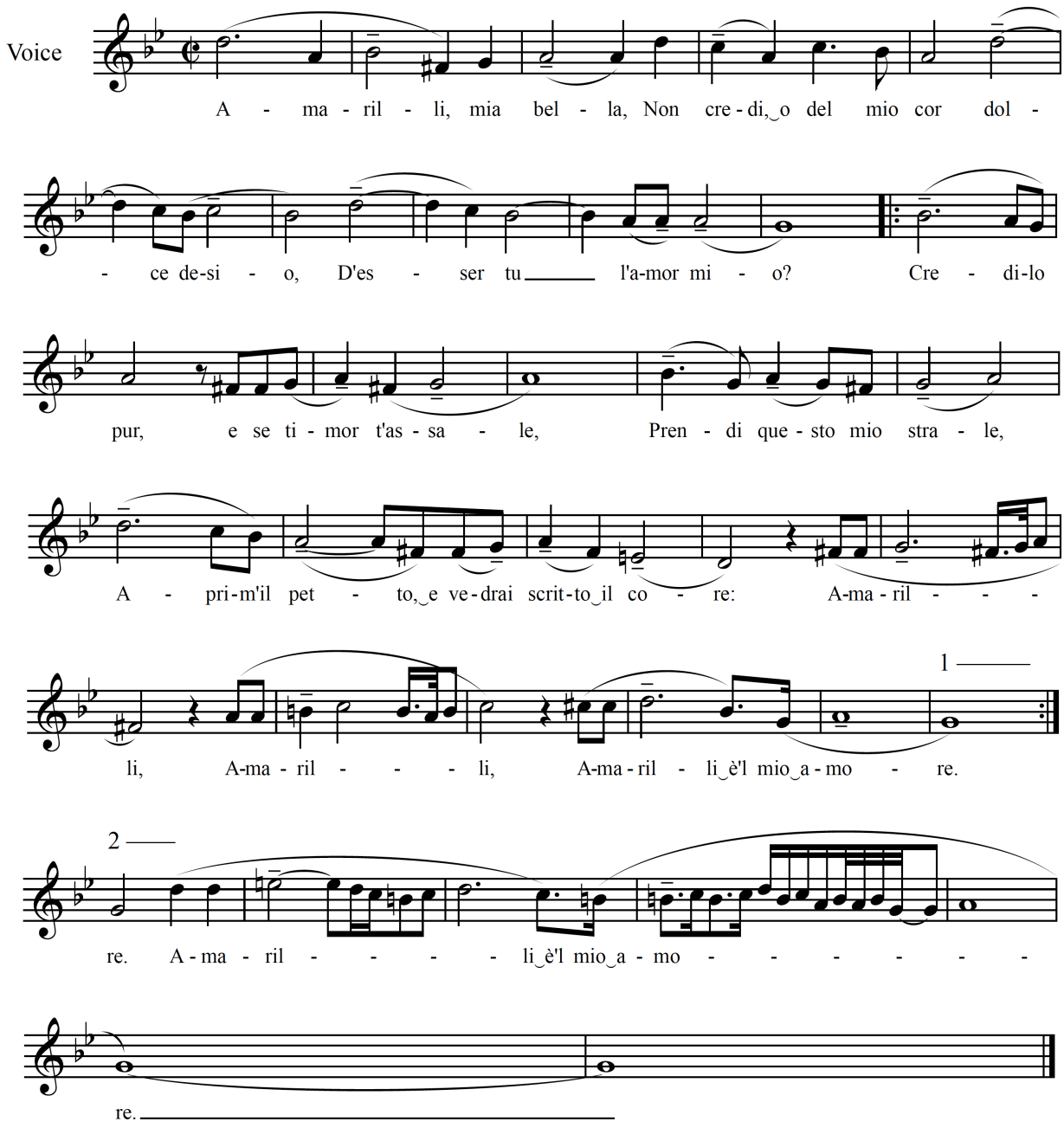
In the initial stages of learning a piece of music, it is often helpful and instructive to follow a few simple steps. Certainly, one should mark with a pencil or highlighter which part he or she is singing if this is not completely obvious. Following that, it is important to pay some attention to the text and its setting. We must always remember that what separates singers from instrumentalists is our ability to express music through text, and for that reason we should never lose sight of the inherent expression in the length and enunciation of words.

How to accurately pronounce the vowels and consonants of individual words can easily be discovered through the use of a good dictionary, which every singer should have at his or her disposal if required.

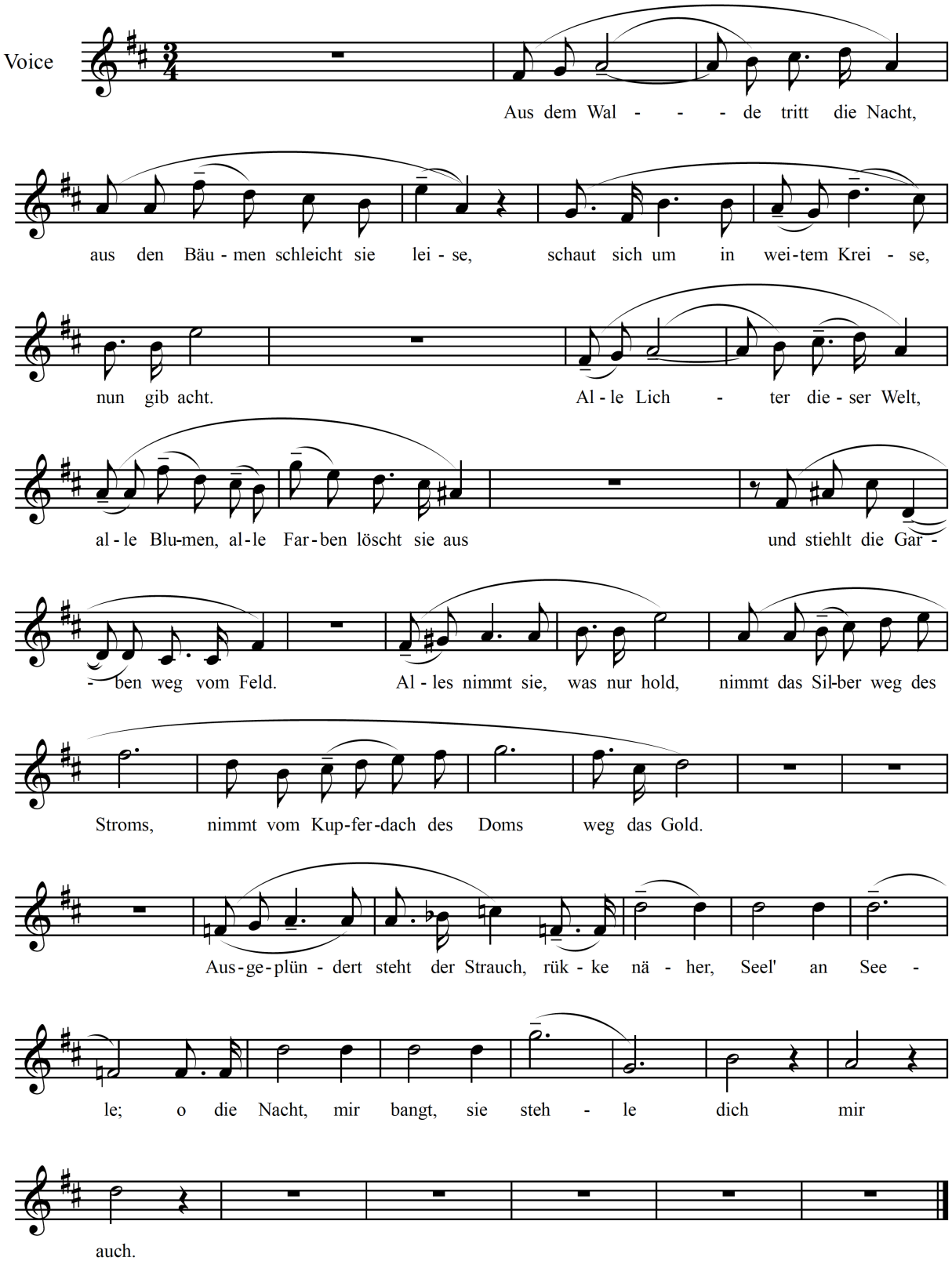
Firstly, in score-marking one should go through the piece and place a phrase mark over every individual word. This step will demonstrate the variety of word lengths themselves, as well as the range with which the composer sets individual words syllabically or melismatically.

Second, one should make a note of the main syllable of each word. Word stress is the most basic level of textual expression and, as such, can give numerous cues to the direction of vocal lines. When one needs assistance in remembering the pronunciation or meaning of certain words, these can also be inserted at this stage in consultation with the translation and transliteration as described in 'Preparation' (pp.23-24).

Example 7 Amarilli, mia bella **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Word-phrasing and word stress (vocal line only)



Example 8 Die Nacht **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Word-phrasing and word stress (vocal line only)



Melodic analysis

The learning of notes and rhythms in a piece of music can be much easier when one begins from a point of melodic comprehension. Putting phrase marks above individual words and taking note of stressed syllables will often already present numerous moments of melodic interest in a vocal line. In addition to or in combination with these moments, there are also expressive details provided through the notated pitches.

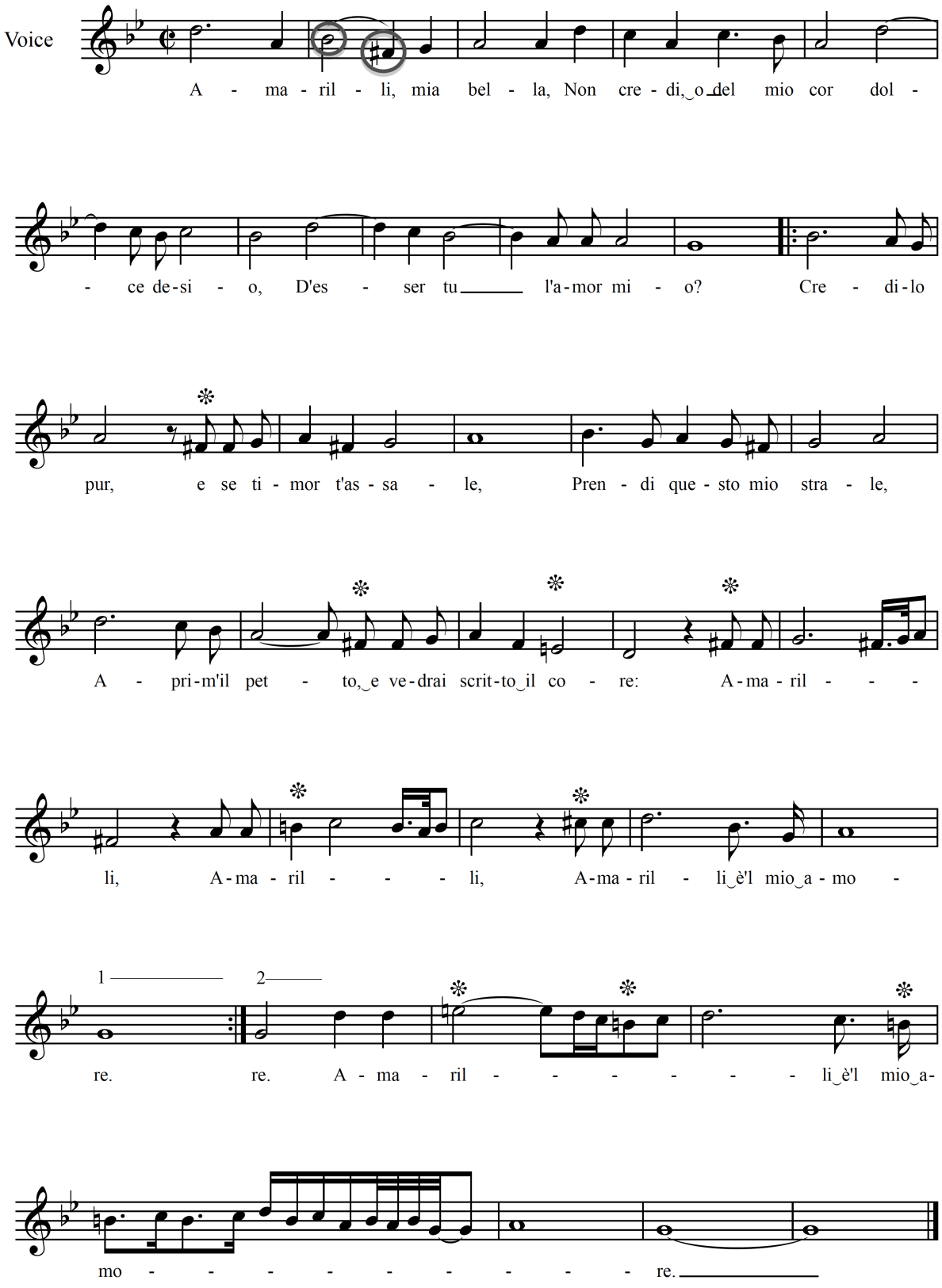
The next step in learning a piece is to play the melody and make note of interesting and/or expressive intervals within the vocal line by circling the two notes that make the interval and drawing a line between them. Certainly any interval may become expressive depending on the text being sung and the singer's personality; however, at this stage one should try to focus on the interest and variety in the intervals themselves.

In the first instance, one should look for dissonant-disjunct intervals (augmented 2nds, diminished 3rds, augmented 4ths, diminished 5ths, minor 7ths, major 7ths, etc.). Even though some of these intervals may sound consonant in isolation, the point is to draw your attention to theoretical and visual dissonances on the page.

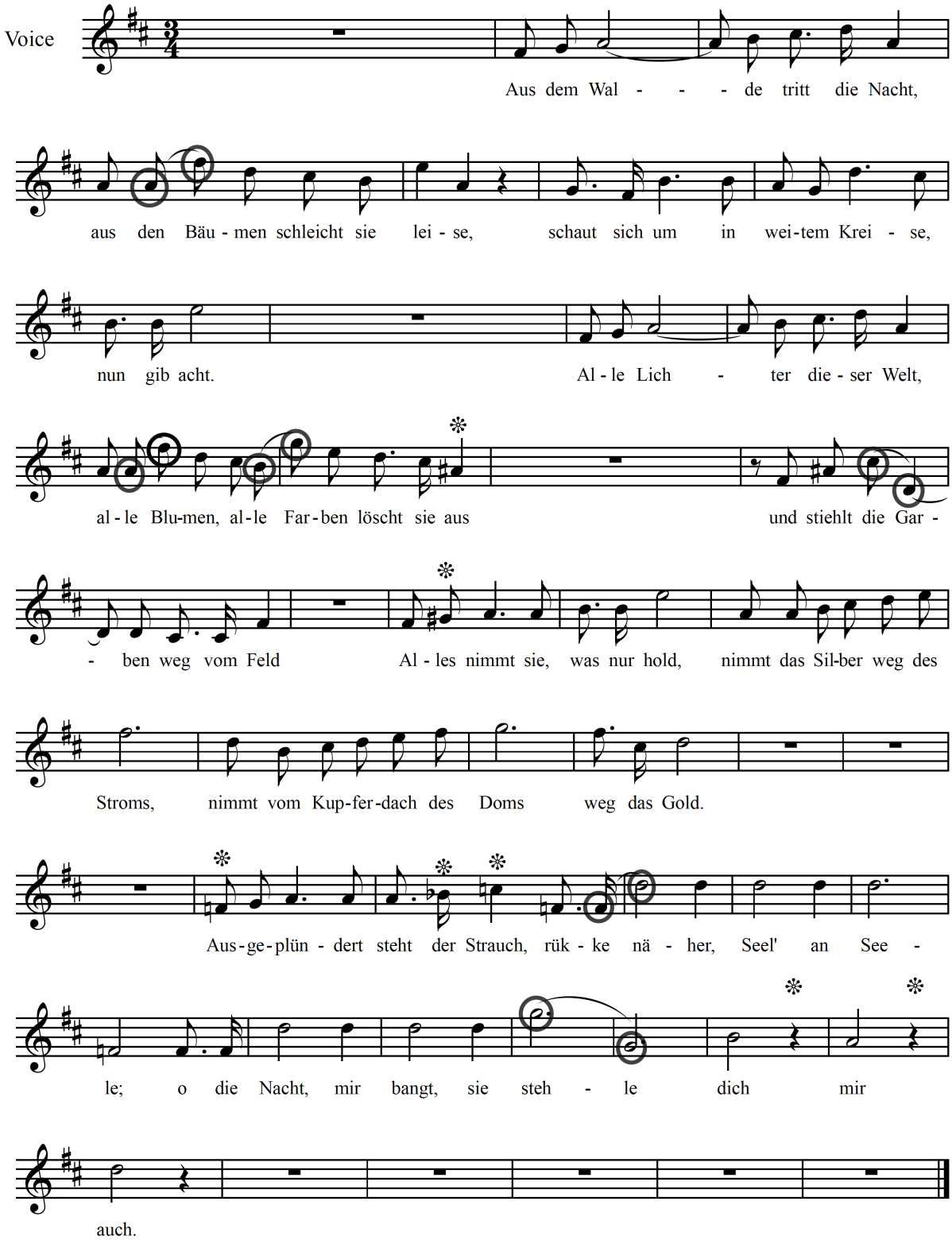
Consonant intervals may also become expressive, particularly when the composer changes between one type of melodic writing and another (usually between predominantly conjunct and disjunct motion). Similarly, stepwise motion can become expressive, particularly when notes outside of the normal key are created through accidentals. In such cases, just take note of the specific altered pitch (marked with an asterisk in the examples below) and see how that fits into the structure subsequently during the harmonic analysis.

Though perhaps already noted in the preparation phase, melodic analysis can also identify striking or unusual repetitions of words, or other subtle variances of word setting (word-omission, word order, etc.). The use and length of rests between phrases and words (and sometimes even within words) can also prove useful in understanding a composer's underlying ideas in poetic meaning and expression.

Example 9 **Amarilli, mia bella** **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Melodic analysis (vocal line only)



Example 10 Die Nacht **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Melodic analysis (vocal line only)



After marking your score, and feeling comfortable playing the melodic line, play through the melody while speaking the corresponding text. This is technically not a singing exercise, but rather a way to connect the sounding pitches and rhythms to the specific text in the ear, and also a way to better appreciate on a intellectual level the relationship between the text and music.

Finally, sing through the piece, playing the melodic line at the same time and/or unaccompanied. If any of the intervals present difficulties in singing, isolate them specifically and repeat them slowly until they are clearly in the ear and in the voice.

Harmonic analysis

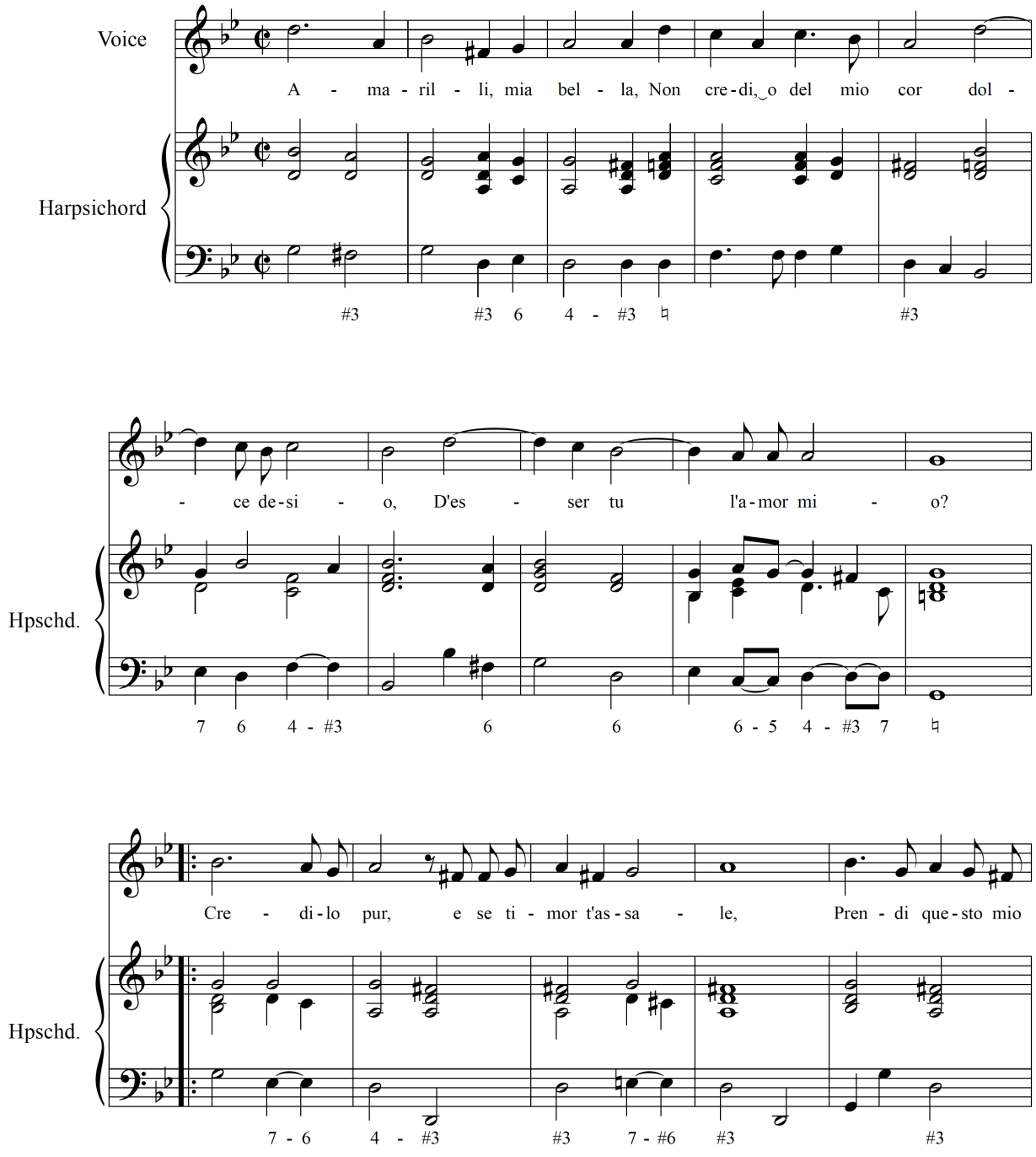
The next step in understanding a score is to see how the vocal melodic line relates to its musical surroundings. This is essentially a shift from a horizontal conception of the music to one that is vertical. During this analysis you can see where some of the notes with accidentals come out of or relate to an underlying harmonic interest.

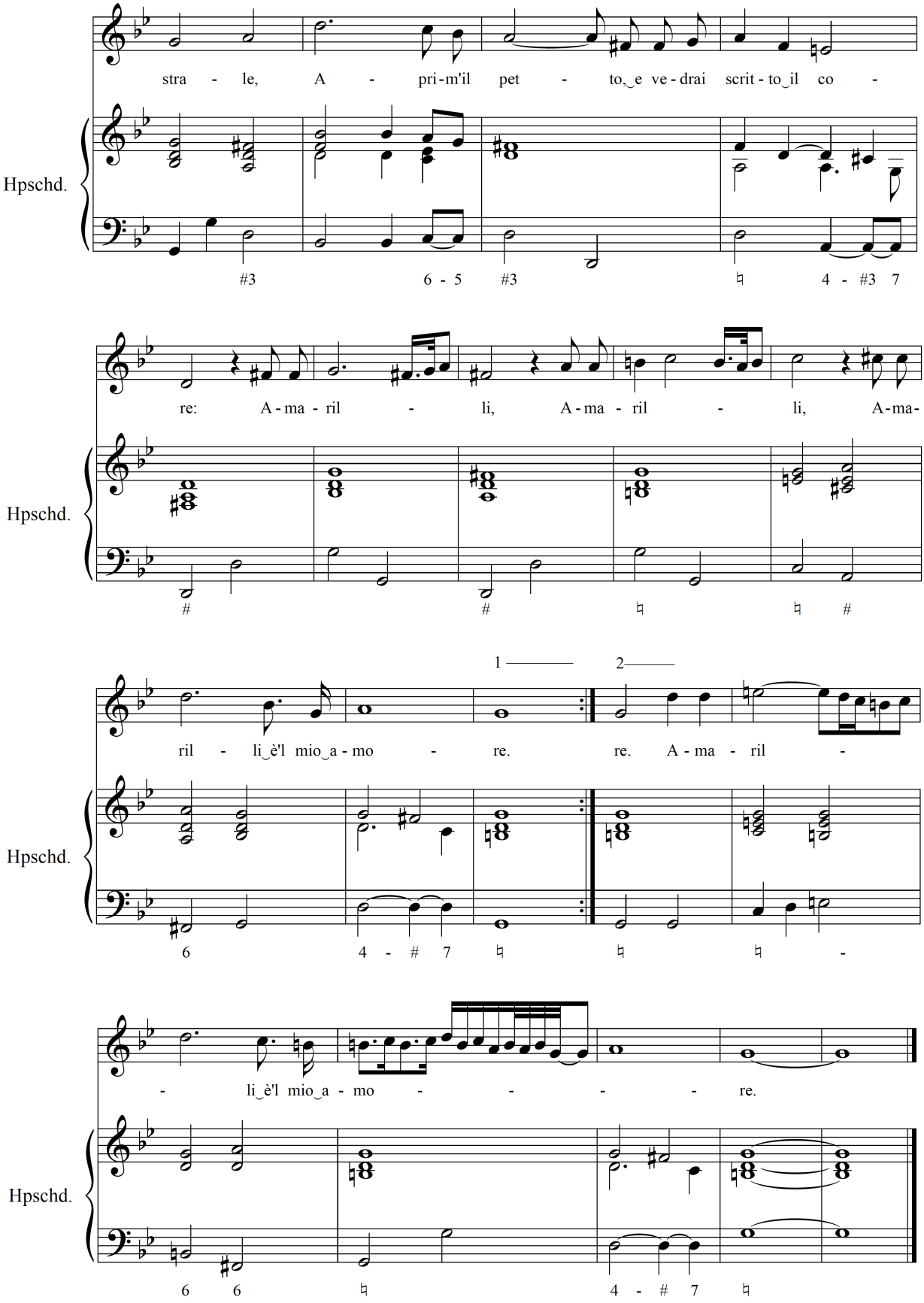
A harmonic analysis done in your own score is quite unlike a typical harmonic analysis done in a theory class, and should therefore look very different. The point is to see how the underlying harmonies relate to and influence the vocal line. That being said, many of the principles of harmony are relevant, the most basic being the varying stability of chords and their inversions.

In harmonic theory, root-position major and minor triads are the most stable chords, followed by first-inversion triads. Second-inversion triads, as well as augmented and diminished chords (in any inversion), are markedly unstable if not expressly dissonant. Dominant-seventh chords follow a certain hierarchy of their own: the dissonant seventh will always give a certain sense of instability; however, the higher the inversion the more unstable the chord. Outside of these main chord types there are clearly many other harmonic possibilities; however, those should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

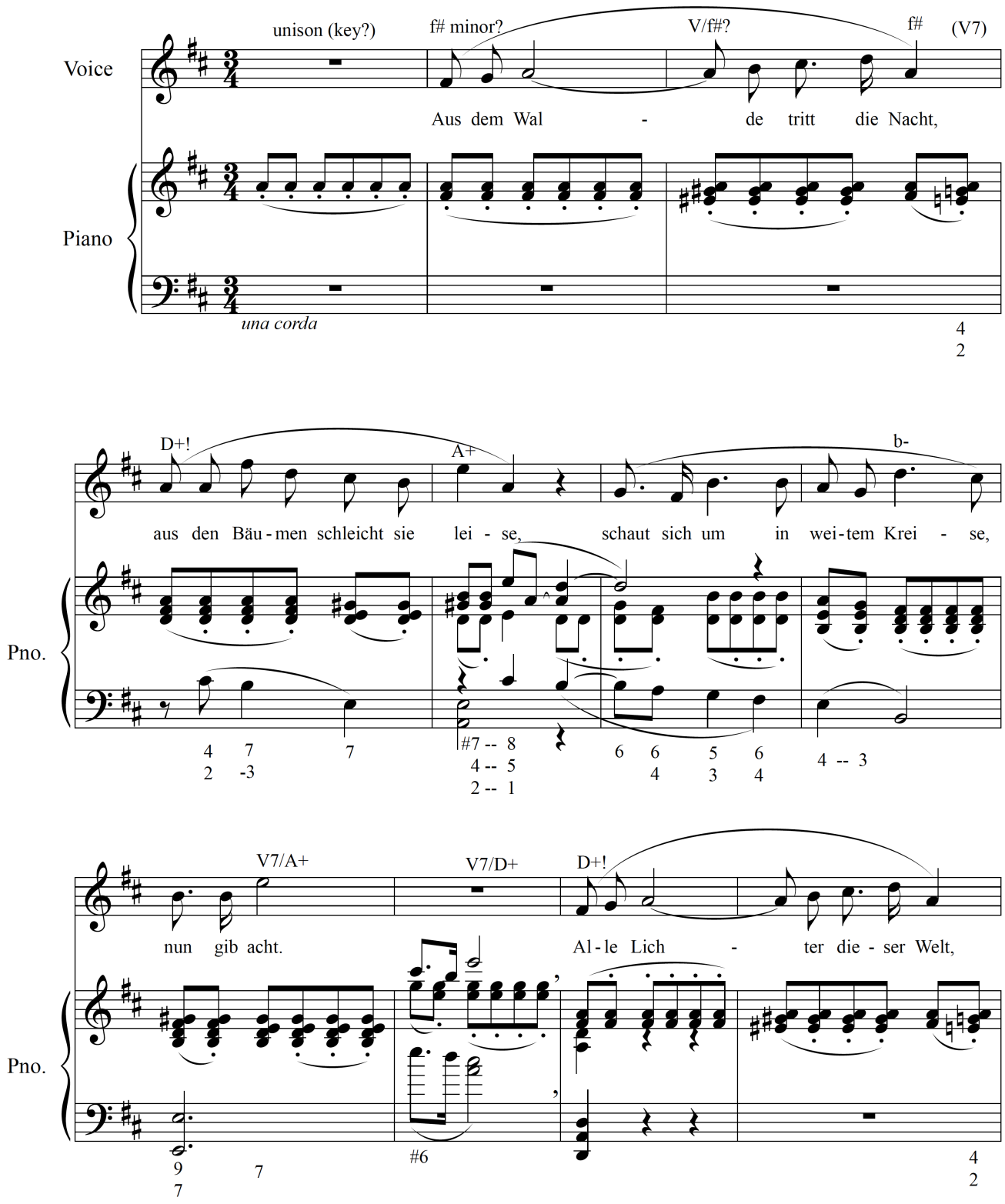
When marking chord inversions in your score it is often best to focus on the accompaniment, and only mark those chords which are in a first inversion or higher. If one is doing a Baroque piece, and is using a good edition, this work may already be done for you by the composer or editor, but certainly the system of figures is an easy and convenient way to mark chord inversions in a score. The important point is to know when an individual note of the vocal line is not supported by a root-position chord, or, conversely, when stable chords finally appear after a section of harmonic instability. Though the underlying harmony may not always dictate the dynamic at which one should sing a specific pitch, it can often give good clues as to the overarching harmonic direction of a phrase and clarify the implicit direction of the melodic line itself. Furthermore, understanding the harmonic structure and how the vocal line relates to it is one of the strongest defences for personal choices of interpretation.

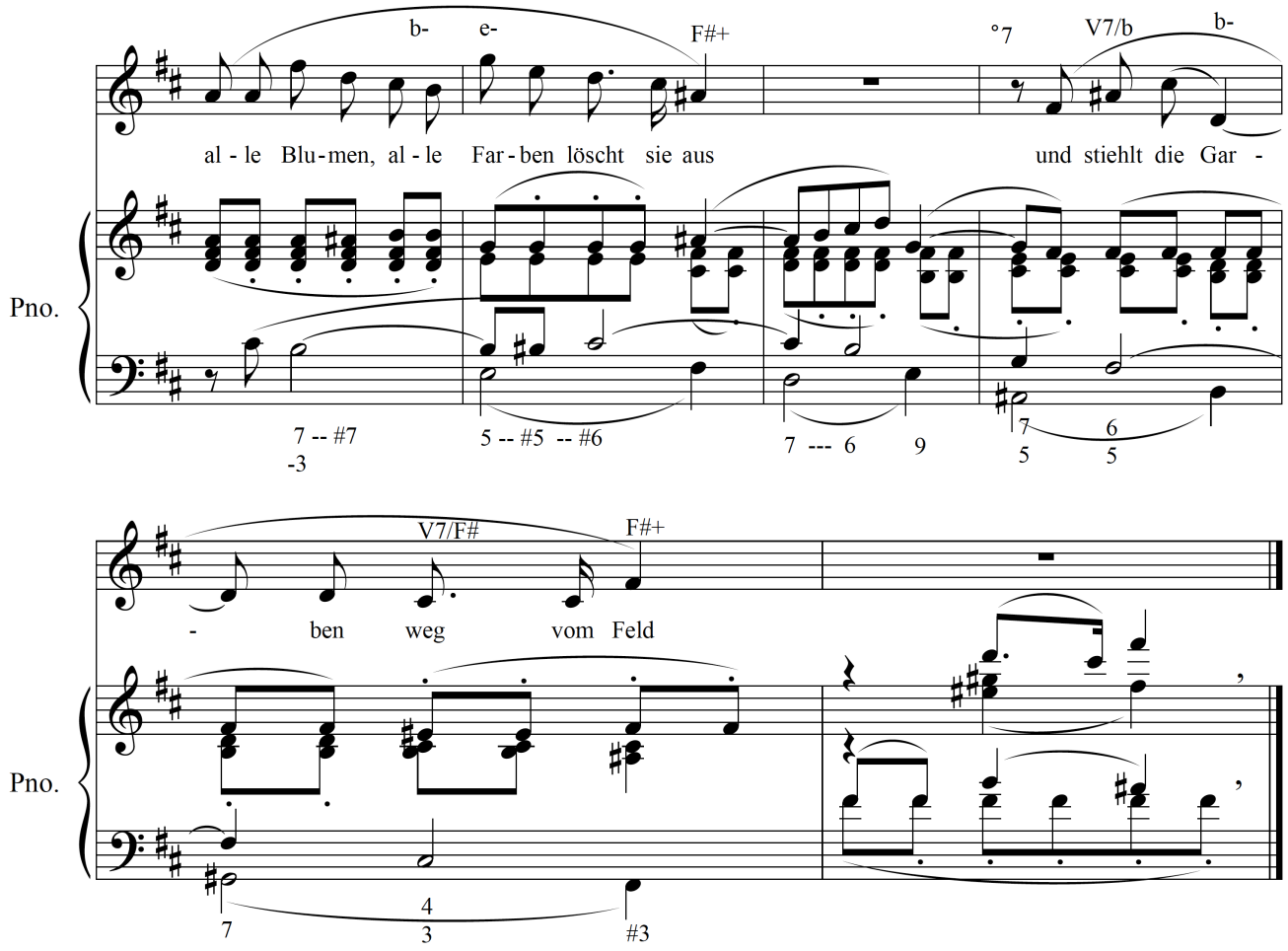
Example 11 Amarilli, mia bella **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Harmonic analysis (complete score)




stra - le, A - pri-m'il pet - to, e ve-drai scrit-to il co -
Hpschd.
re: A-ma-ril - li, A-ma-ril - li, A-ma-
Hpschd.
1
2
ril - li è'l mio a-mo - re. re. A-ma-ril -
Hpschd.
- li è'l mio a-mo - - - - re.
Hpschd.

Example 12 Die Nacht, mm. 1-17 **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Harmonic analysis (complete score)



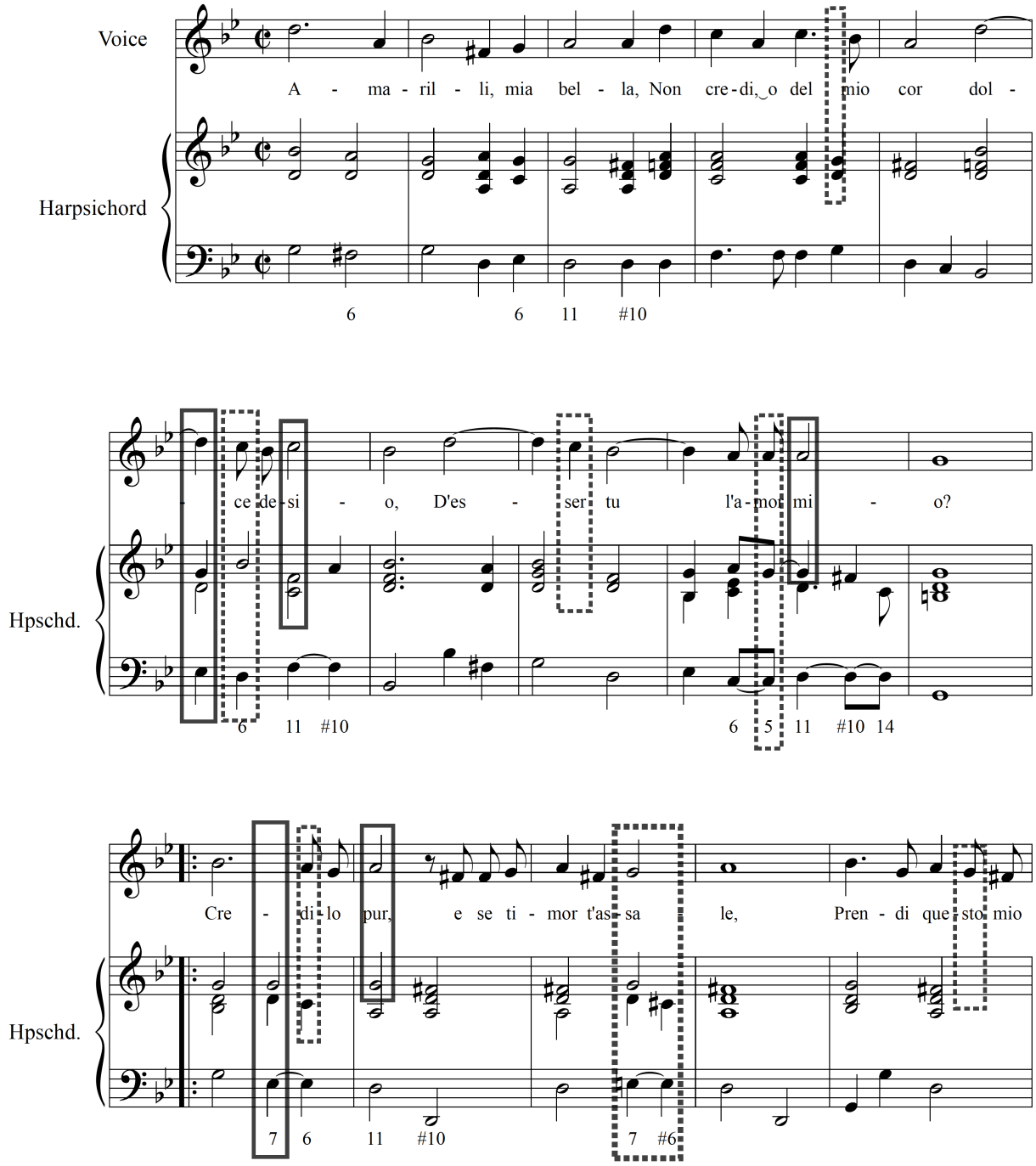


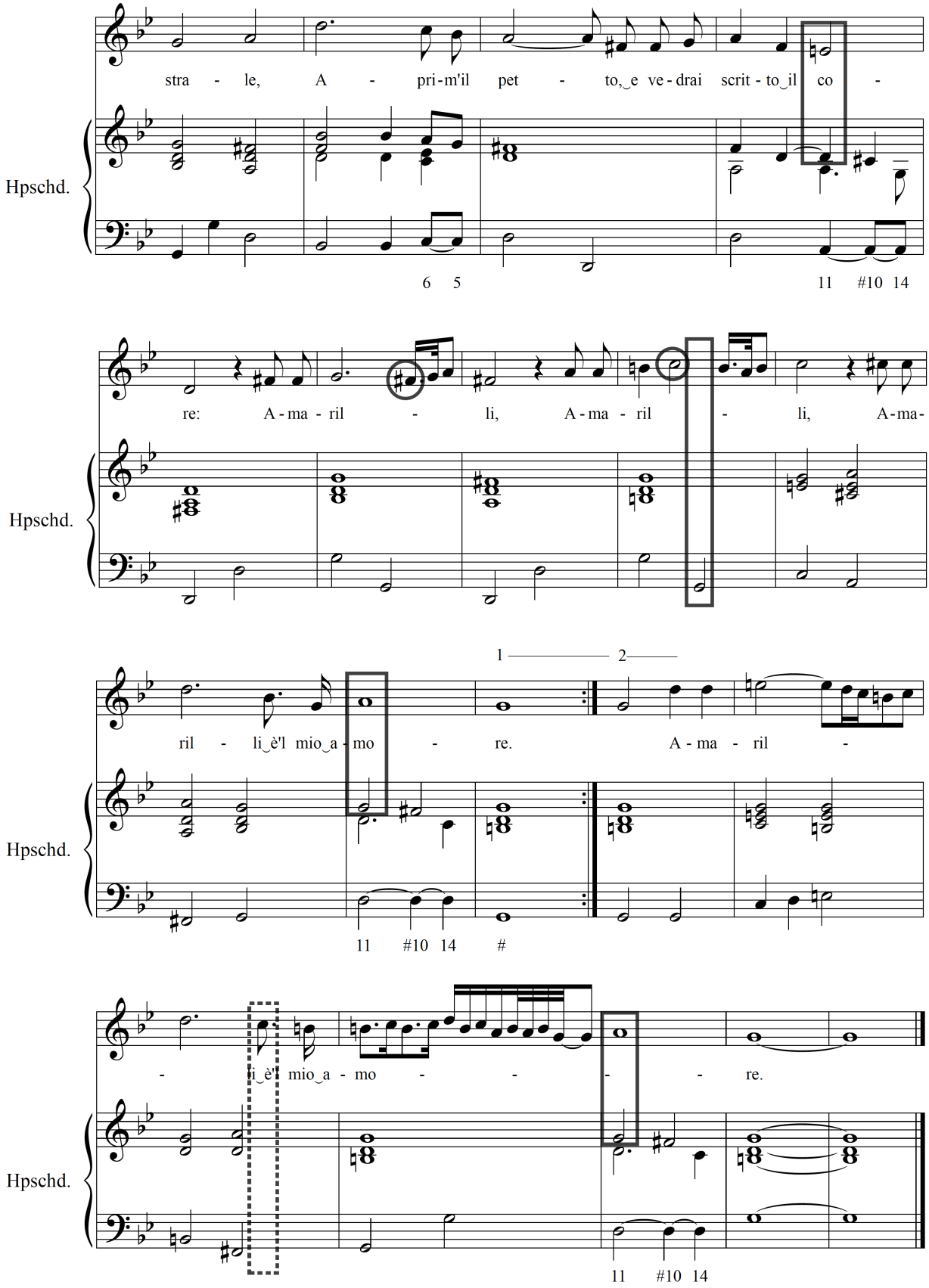
In the above examples I have provided basic figures below each system to mark the variety of chords and inversions. In 'Die Nacht' the figuring is sometimes incomplete, as some chords/pitches are not immediately indicative of a clear harmony. In this example I have also provided some harmonic commentary relating to key relationships above each system.

In the next step, one should sing the vocal line with the accompanying harmonies and make note of any dissonances that present themselves. One should do this very slowly out of time, moving from one vertical event to the next. When a dissonance appears, determine whether the dissonant note is in the vocal line, or against the vocal line. Occasionally certain vertical moments will contain multiple dissonances and be difficult to label with the system of figures seen above. In such circumstances, do not waste your time trying to come up with the theoretical name for the chord, but simply mark a box vertically in the score to be aware of an interesting vertical moment and to realize how the vocal part fits within it. While harmonic inversions of consonant chords imply a certain degree of horizontal direction, moments of harmonic dissonance are clearly expressive pillars within a musical phrase, particularly when the dissonance employed is used exceptionally or sparingly. Of course, certain pieces use harmonic (and melodic) dissonance more frequently than others, often to the point where

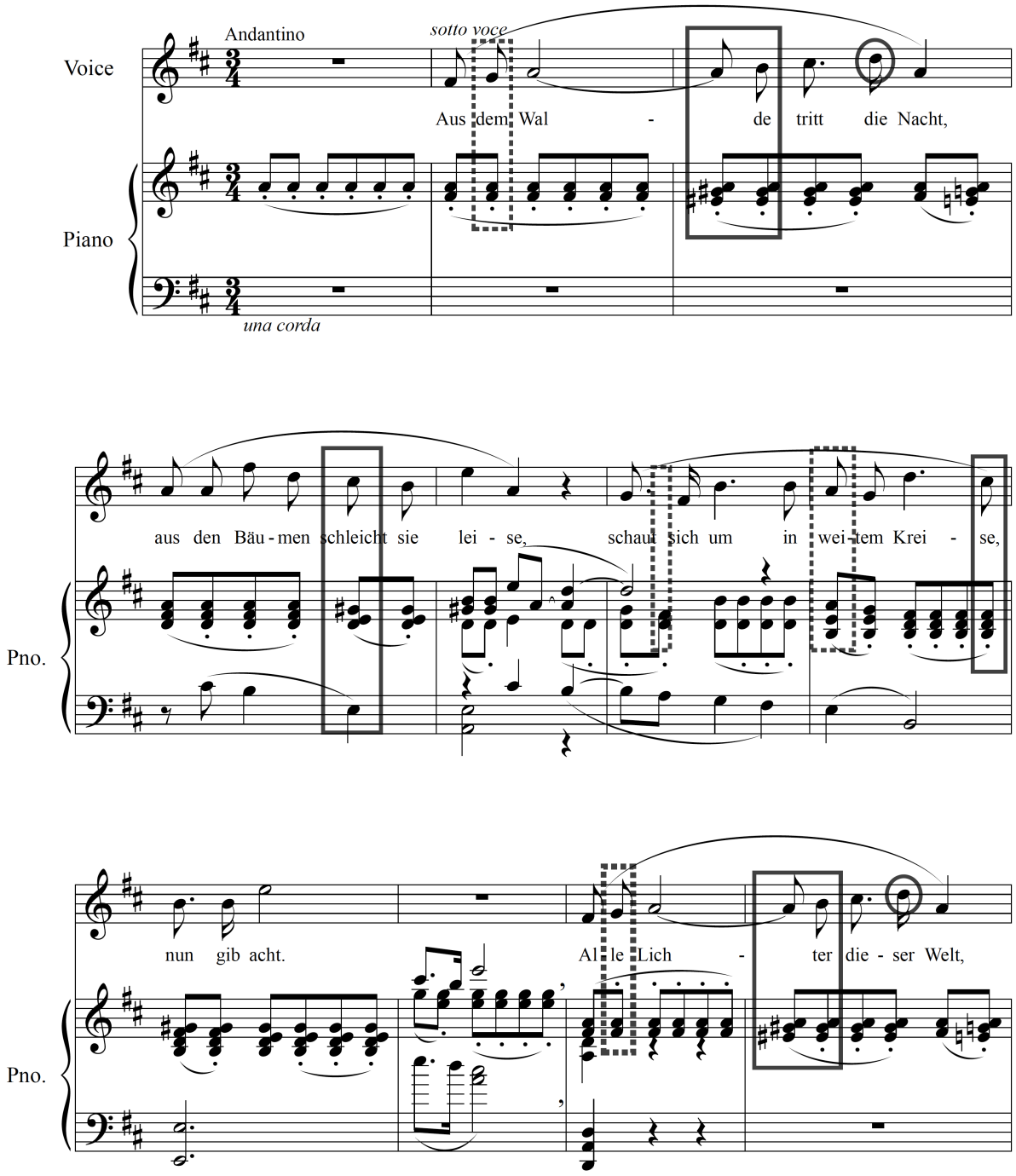
conventional dissonances become a sort of consonance in that style. In such cases the importance of individual dissonances is clearly relative, and the relative importance of each must be determined by the singer's taste.

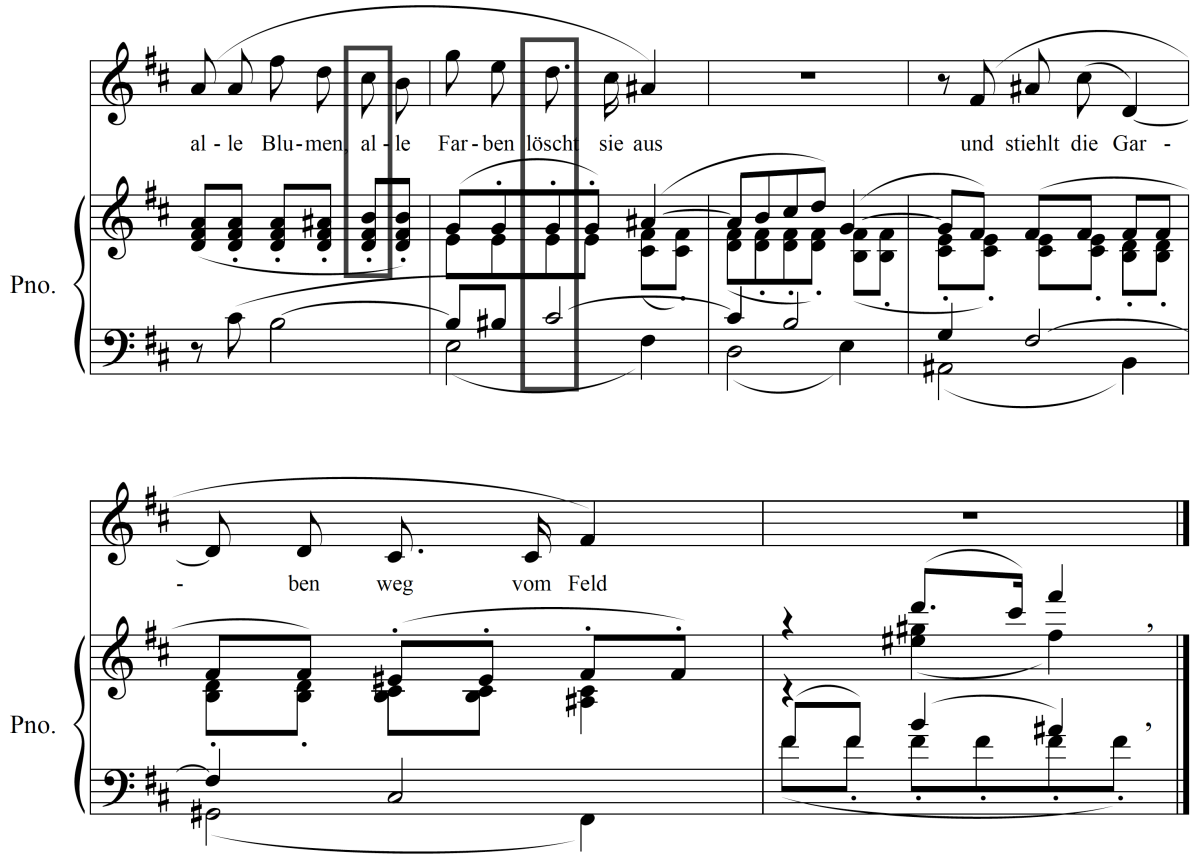
Example 13 Amarilli, mia bella **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Marked dissonances with vocal line (complete score)




stra - le, A - pri-m'il pet - to, e ve-drai scrit-to il co -
Hpschd.
6 5
11 #10 14
re: A-ma-ril - li, A-ma-ril - li, A-ma-
Hpschd.
1
2
ril - li è'l mio a-mo - re. A-ma-ril -
Hpschd.
11 #10 14 #
- li è'l mio a-mo - - - - re.
Hpschd.
11 #10 14

Example 14 Die Nacht, mm. 1-17 Richard Strauss (1864-1949)
Marked dissonances with vocal line (complete score)





In the above examples I have marked dissonant moments, which the singer should at least be aware of, if not make evident, when he or she sings these songs. Moments of clear harmonic tension I have marked vertically with a rectangle. A broken rectangle marks more subtle moments of vertical harmonic interest, while circled notes in the melody show pitches that do not fit within the underlying harmony, but create some additional harmonic interest.

Considering both the basic harmonic analysis and dissonance in relation to the vocal line determines whether any passages or moments stand out as particularly stable or unstable harmonically or whether the harmonic context renders any specific pitches of the vocal line exceptionally interesting. Determine whether this information might entail a specific manner of execution.

Vocal analysis

The last step in one's initial learning of a piece should be a very meticulous study and practice of its uniquely vocal elements. Some of these issues were indirectly addressed with the preparatory work on pronunciation and score-marking related to individual words; however, this work must be carried much further, as particularly vocal issues may arise when text is married to specific pitches. The best composers were well aware of the beauty and expression of the voice through vowels and consonants on different pitches. It is our duty to ensure that the composer's intentions are realized, and we owe it to ourselves to execute these in the most efficient and healthy manner possible.

This step can take a great deal of time, and may indeed become frustrating, as it often displays weaknesses in our singing techniques. Moreover, the work can be tiring for the voice when it is clear that these technical weaknesses exist, so one should feel free to do this work in bits and pieces rather than tackle a full song or aria in one go.

At a very slow tempo or out of time, sing the vocal line and prolong every different vocal sound that the words require. By doing this (and subsequent exercises) while also playing the accompaniment, you reinforce the musical and vocal implications of your thorough harmonic analysis. Here your IPA transliteration can come in handy, as the IPA system gives you a symbol for every specific sound and clarifies what that is. Though it is true that the majority of singing takes place on vowels, it is also true that intelligibility of the text necessitates clear and accurate consonants. Moreover, pitches may be sustained on certain consonants, and awareness of this can be an immensely expressive tool.

The aim of this exercise is to be certain of every vocal sound required and to gain an appreciation of which specific consonants and vowels will require the most attention in the subsequent preparation so that everything may be executed with a healthy technique. Here I shall divide the different vocal sounds into groups from easiest to most difficult.

Unvoiced consonants

[p, t, k, f, θ, ʃ, ç, x, h]

These sounds, as they do not require any phonation, should normally be no problem for any singer. One should, however, be certain of each consonant's accurate production.

Vowels and diphthongs

Since we sing predominantly on vowels anyway, most vowels should be of minimal difficulty to a singer during this exercise aside from ensuring appropriate tongue and mouth positions. During this exercise, one may make personal decisions about vowel-modification; however, try to ensure integrity of vowels whenever possible. In diphthongs, one's analysis is important

to determine the appropriate length of each vowel within the syllable as well as the quality of the vowel which is the shorter of the two.

Plosive voiced consonants and nasal consonants

[b, d, g, m, n, ŋ]

These consonants are relatively easy to execute, although pitch variances can lead to increases in jaw or tongue tension, which adversely affects the quality and clarity of the sound. It is important to remember from a musical point of view that all these consonants (like those below) carry pitch. When they are at the beginning of a word, be certain that the pitch of the consonant is the same as the subsequent vowel. When the consonant is at the end of a syllable, be certain the pitch matches the preceding vowel. Nasal consonants carry an additional function similar to diphthongs, as the length with which we employ them is highly variable. Thus, when executing a nasal consonant, be certain that its length is appropriate, being neither too short when the text demands prolongation, nor too long when it may reduce the length of an expressive vowel.

Voiced fricative consonants

[v, ð, z, ʒ]

Voiced fricatives are arguably the most difficult and most neglected consonants. Those who are able to correctly produce and sustain them often can do so because of a very solid technical foundation, and they reap the benefits of improved resonance as a result. Just as with the other voiced consonants, they should be accurately pitched to match their relative vowel. Moreover, as they can sustain pitch, one should be certain that their expressive possibilities are not neglected, either by making them too short at the beginning of a syllable, or by modifying or omitting them at the end.

Coloratura

Though a great deal of what has been discussed above is applicable to the learning of coloratura, it is also true that coloratura poses many challenges of its own. In predominantly syllabic writing the text is often the primary guide to internal phrasing, whereas in extended passages of coloratura we must search for other clues in determining different points of arrival and departure. While certain voices may find the singing of coloratura easier or more difficult by nature, ultimately the ability to sing fast, accurate, and expressive coloratura comes down to technique and musicality, and all professional singers should be able to handle any coloratura that they are required to sing with ease.

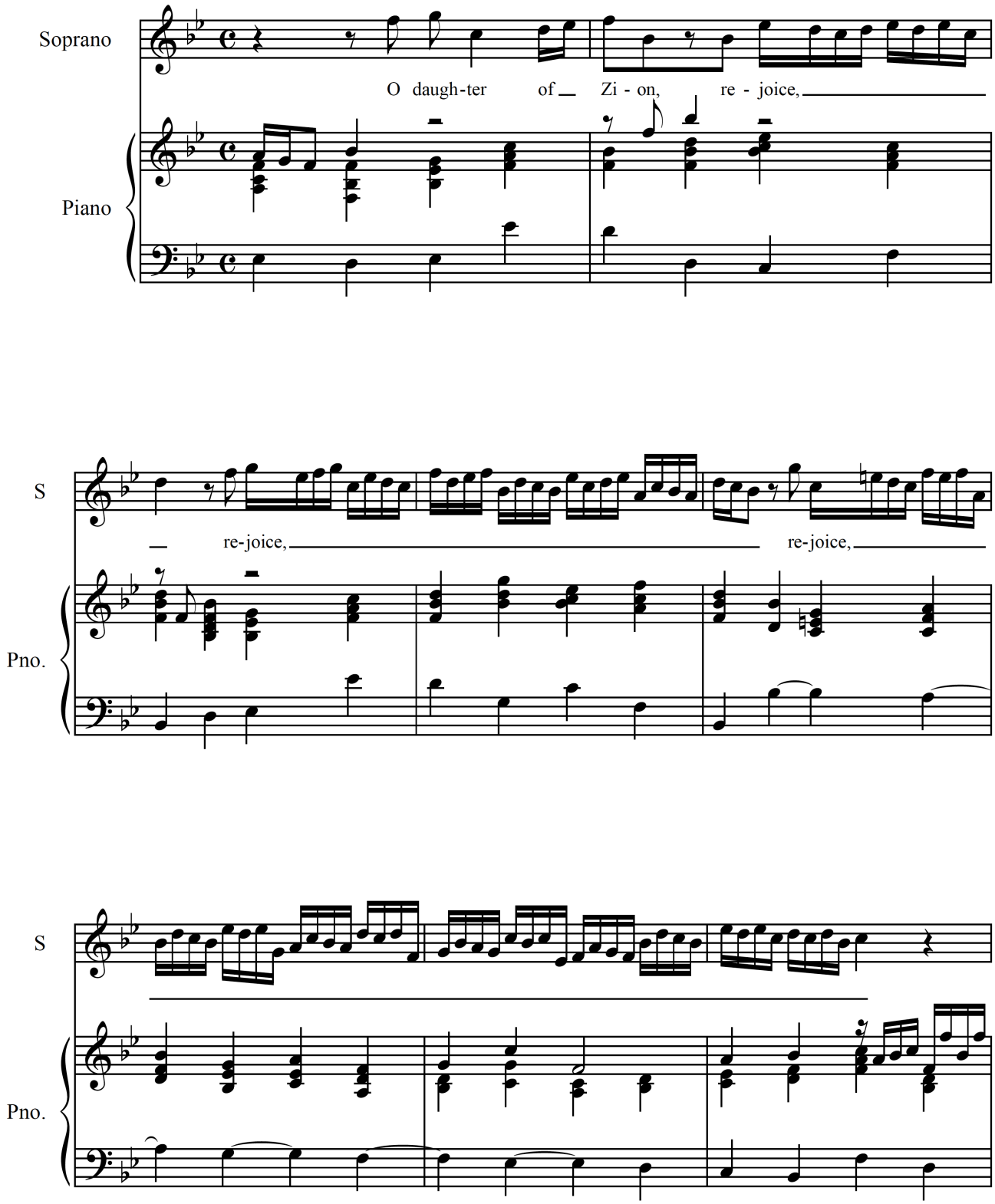
Below are four excerpts, representing all voice types, for which I shall subsequently provide score markings with commentary.

Learn the notes

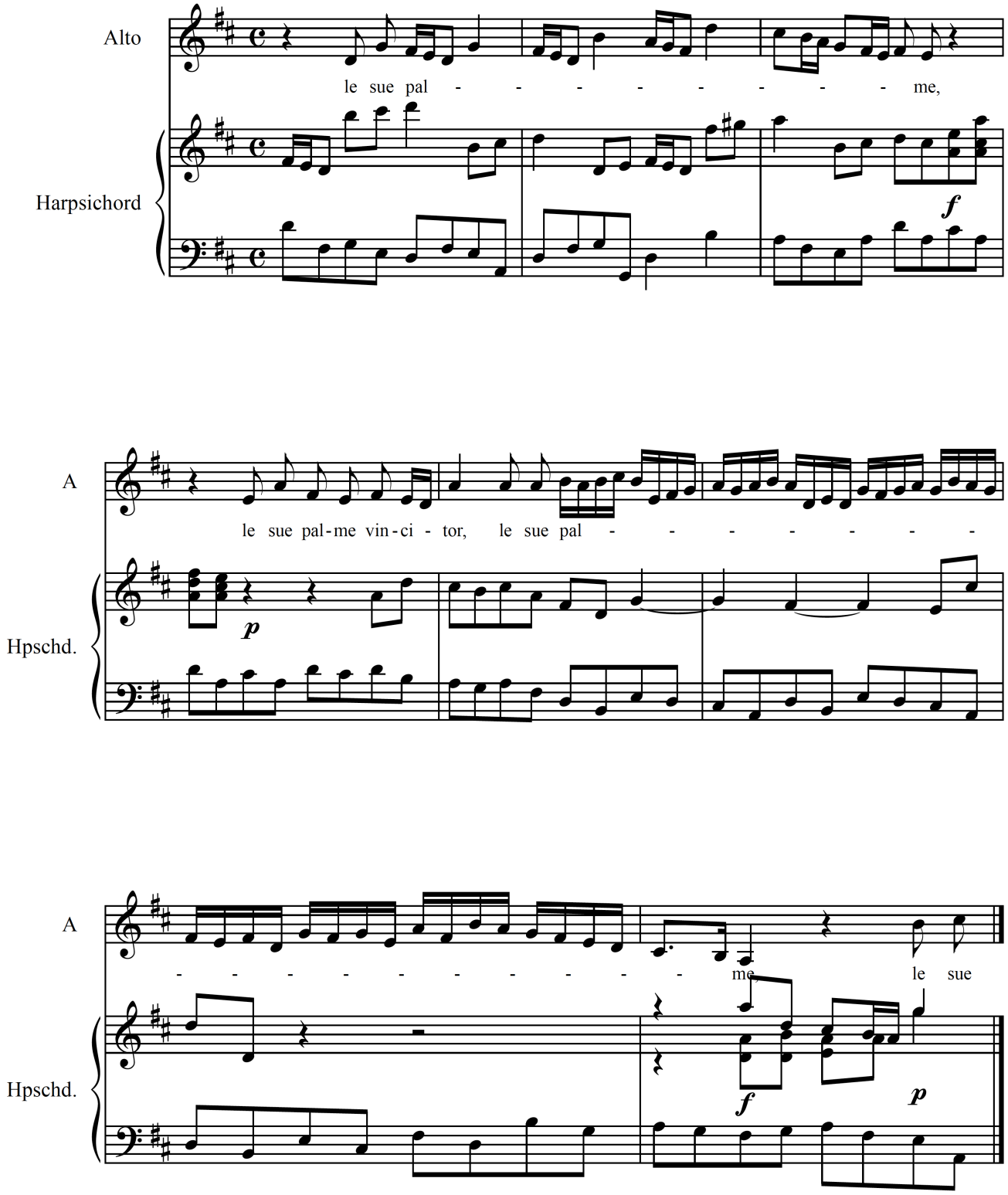
To begin learning a passage of coloratura, one should begin by singing through the line out of time, ensuring that every pitch has a correct intonation with good resonance, and that the connection between pitches is smooth. Certain passages of coloratura require separation between pitches, or staccato notes, and these should be adhered to. That being said, it is my opinion that the key to successful and fast execution of coloratura generally requires a legato approach.

Next, in a strict but slow tempo, learn the phrase from the end to the beginning. Choose a number of beats to deal with at a time (preferably just one or two). Begin with the last group of notes in the passage, and once this is learned, begin successively one group earlier until you reach the beginning. If or when the passage becomes too long and you require a breath in the middle to continue, take a breath when you need, but recommence the passage one or two beats before where you took the breath. During this process, note any specific moments which continue to be difficult to sing accurately and practise them individually out of context.

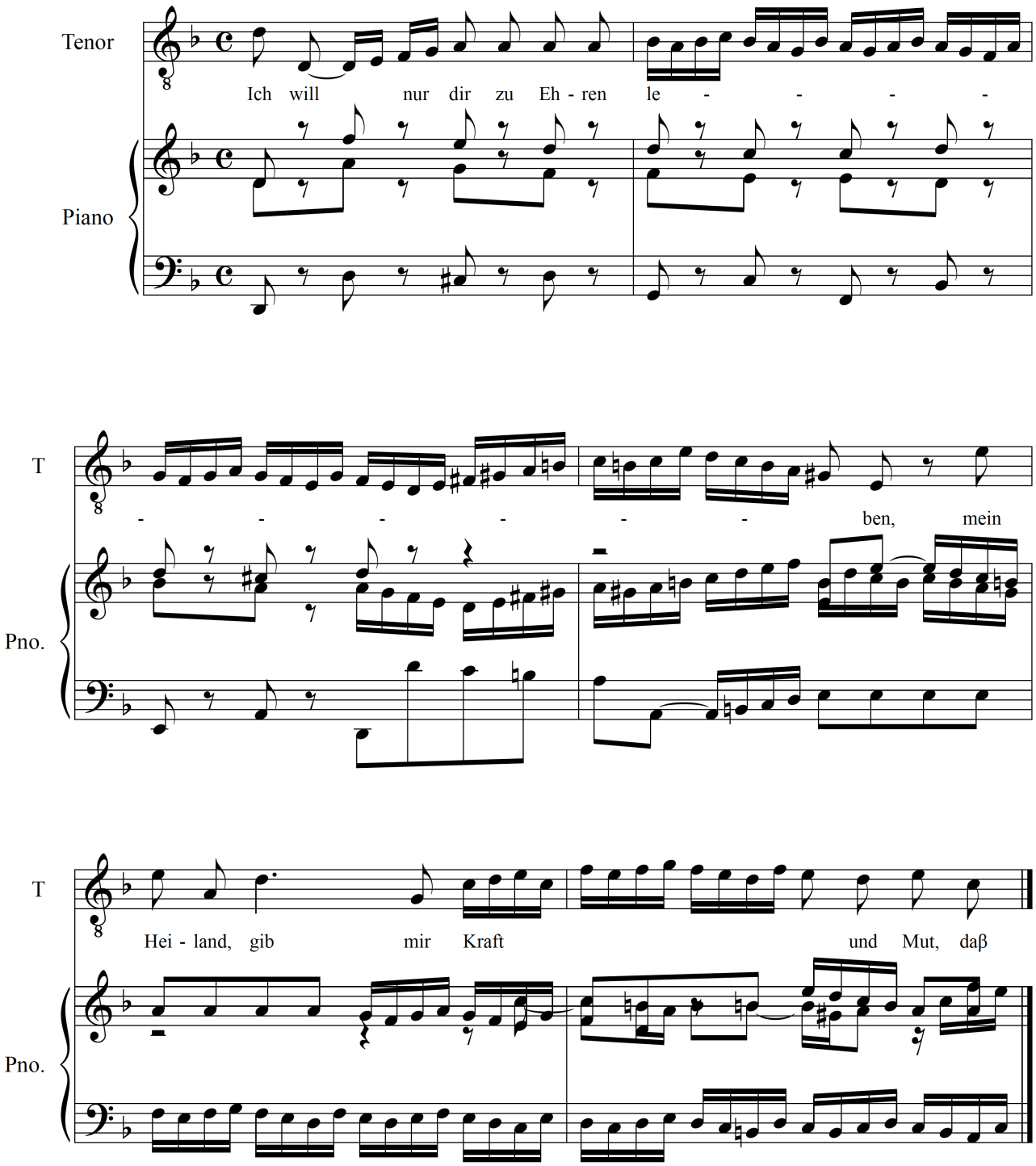
Example 15 'Rejoice greatly' (*Messiah)*, mm. 16-23 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Original



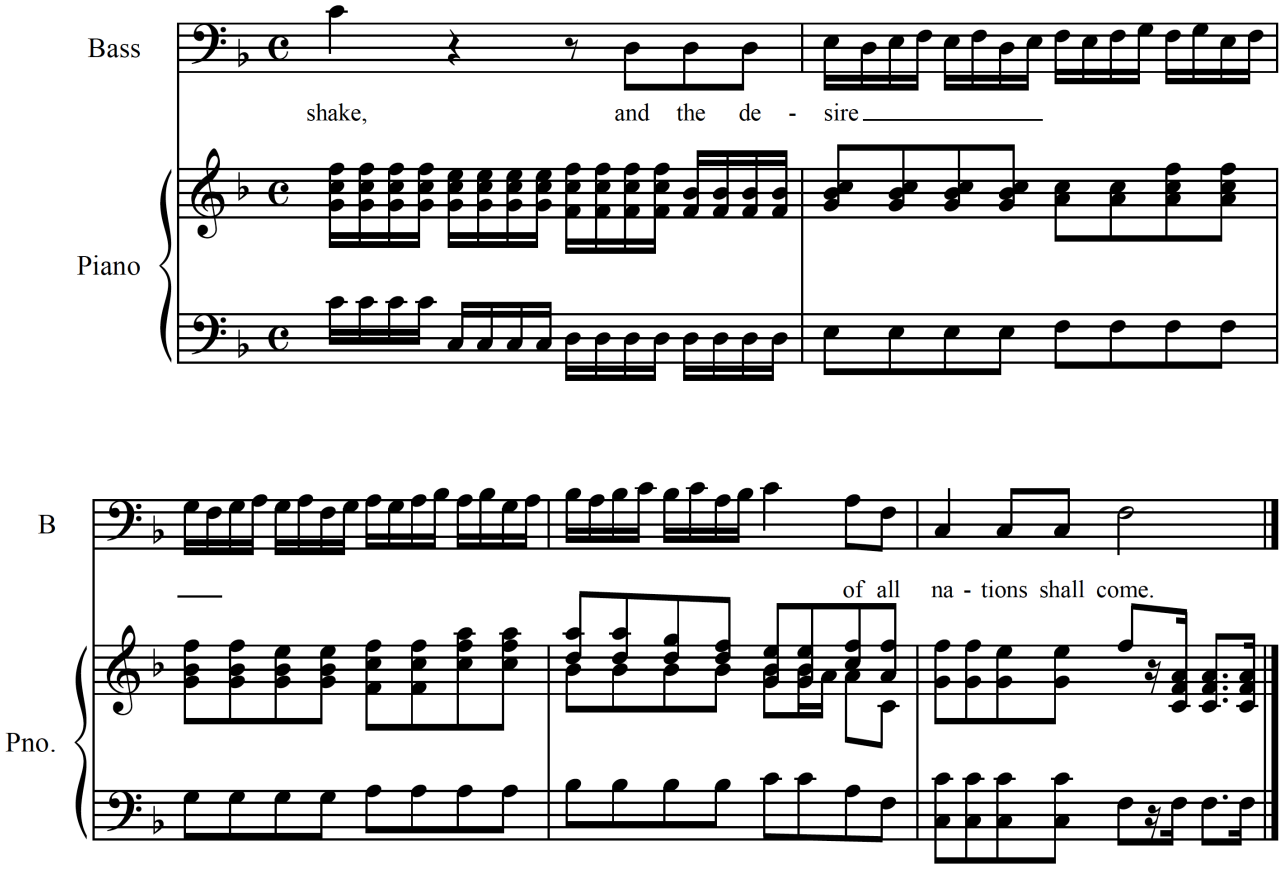
Example 16 'Presti omai' (*Giulio Cesare),* mm. 23-30 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Original



Example 17 'Ich will nur dir' (*Christmas Oratorio*), mm. 13-18 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
Original



Example 18 'Thus saith the Lord' (*Messiah*), mm. 58-68 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Original

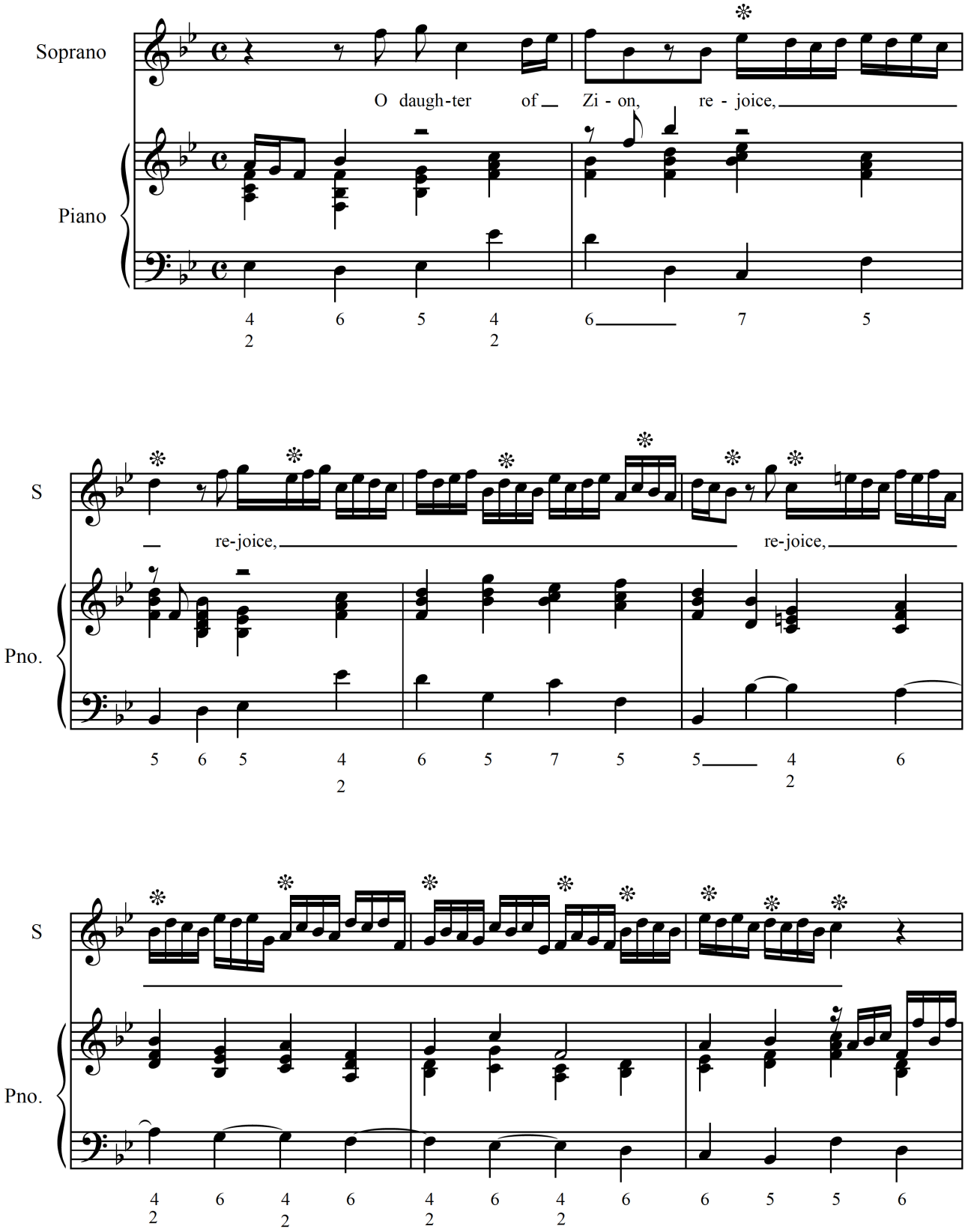


Passage-analysis

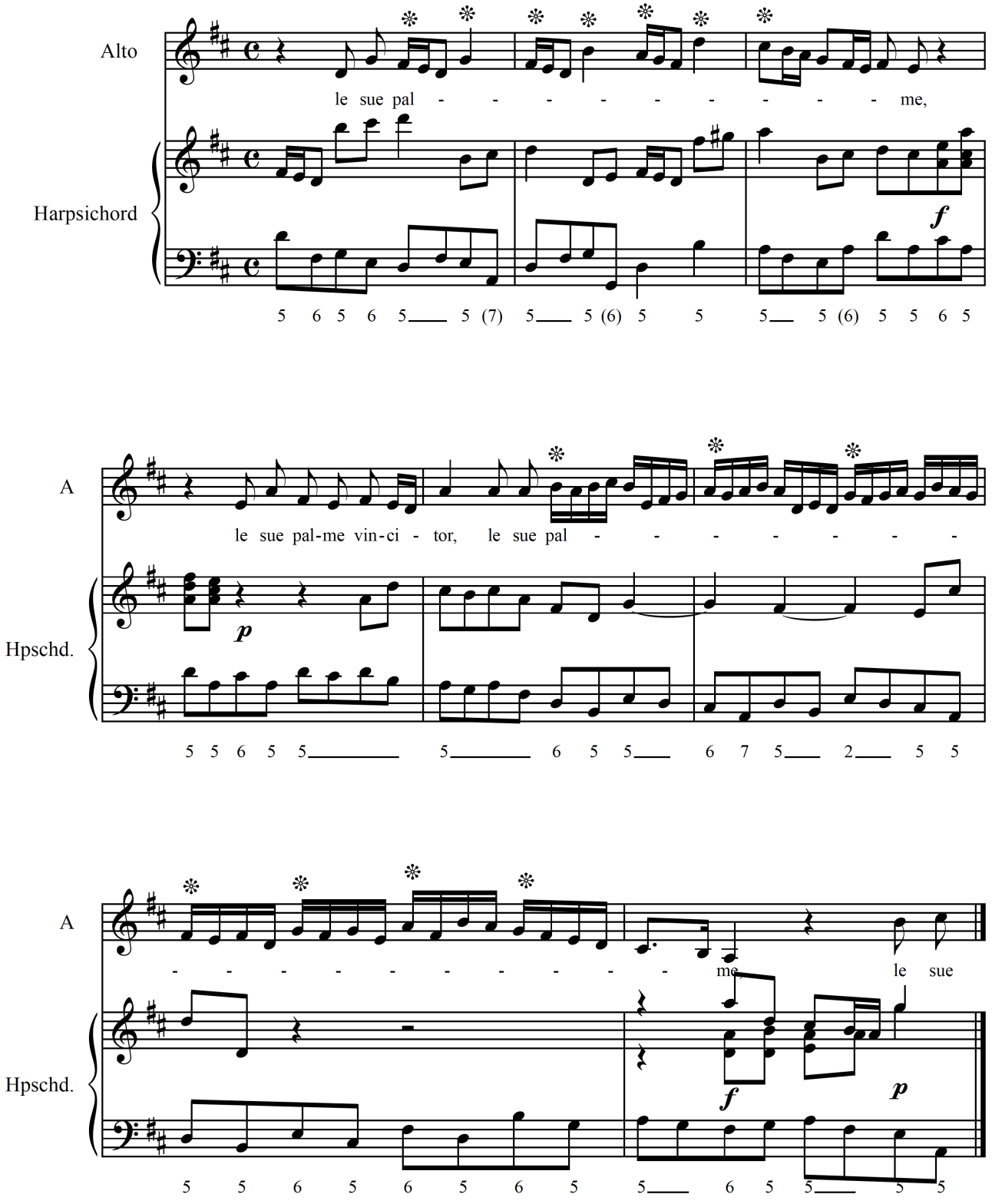
Just as we marked moments of harmonic interest above, so should this be done (if you have not already) for all passages of coloratura. Indeed, in melismatic passages, details of harmonic rhythm largely take over the implied phrasing normally given us by text-accentuation. Take note of which pitches are supported by root-position chords and which are not, particularly when the latter appear on a stressed beat of the bar. Also, as indicated above, mark any unusual or interesting harmony, especially if it involves a direct dissonance with the vocal line.

If the coloratura is happening in connection with another voice or instrument, it is also important to see whether any phrase movement is mirrored elsewhere. If you move in the same manner as another voice, take note of this, and always ensure that these notes line up vertically in rehearsals. One may also look at accompanying instruments to see if the composer gives them any specific phrase-markings which could be mirrored in your line.

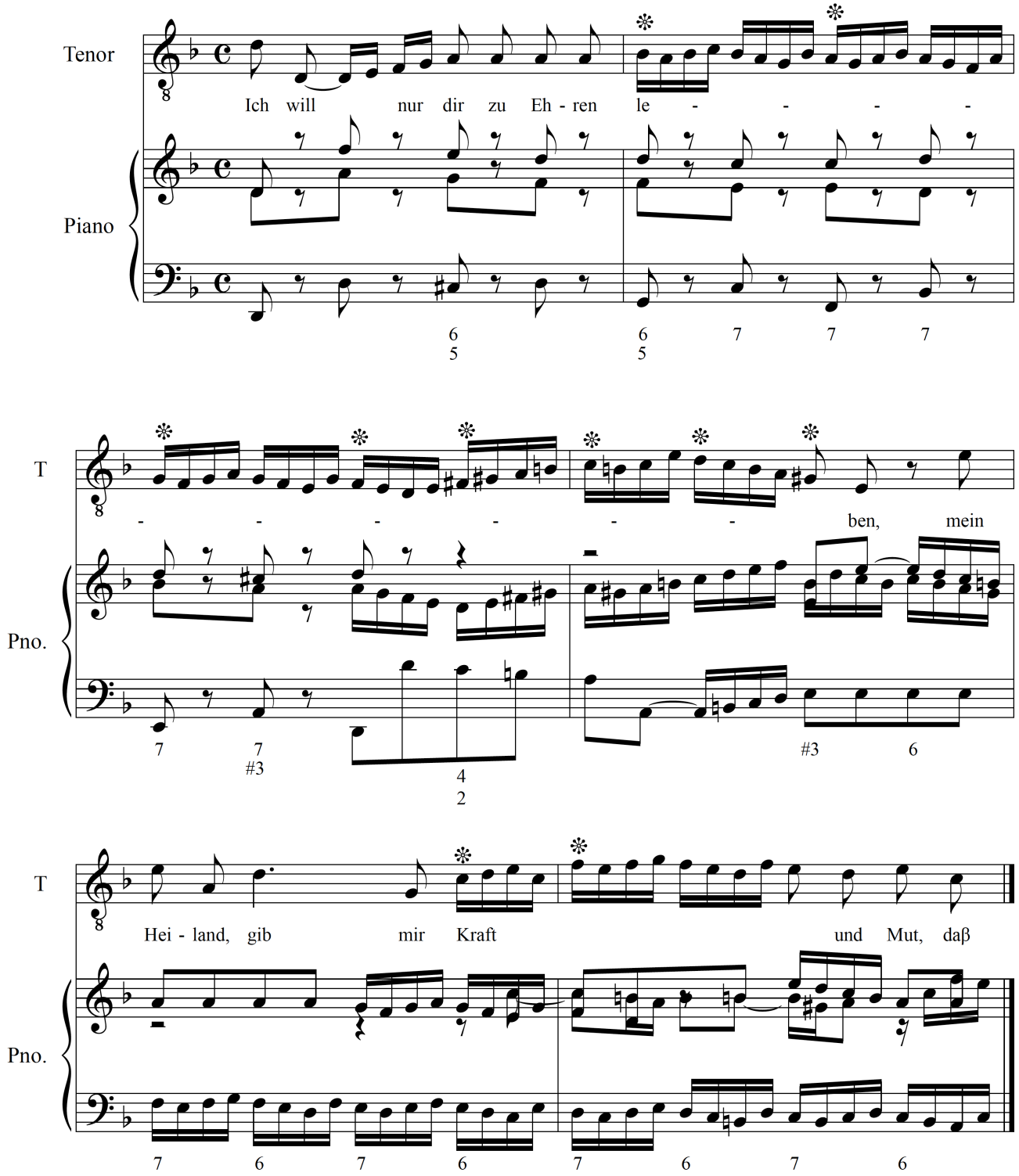
Example 19 'Rejoice greatly' (*Messiah)*, mm. 16-23 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Passage-analysis



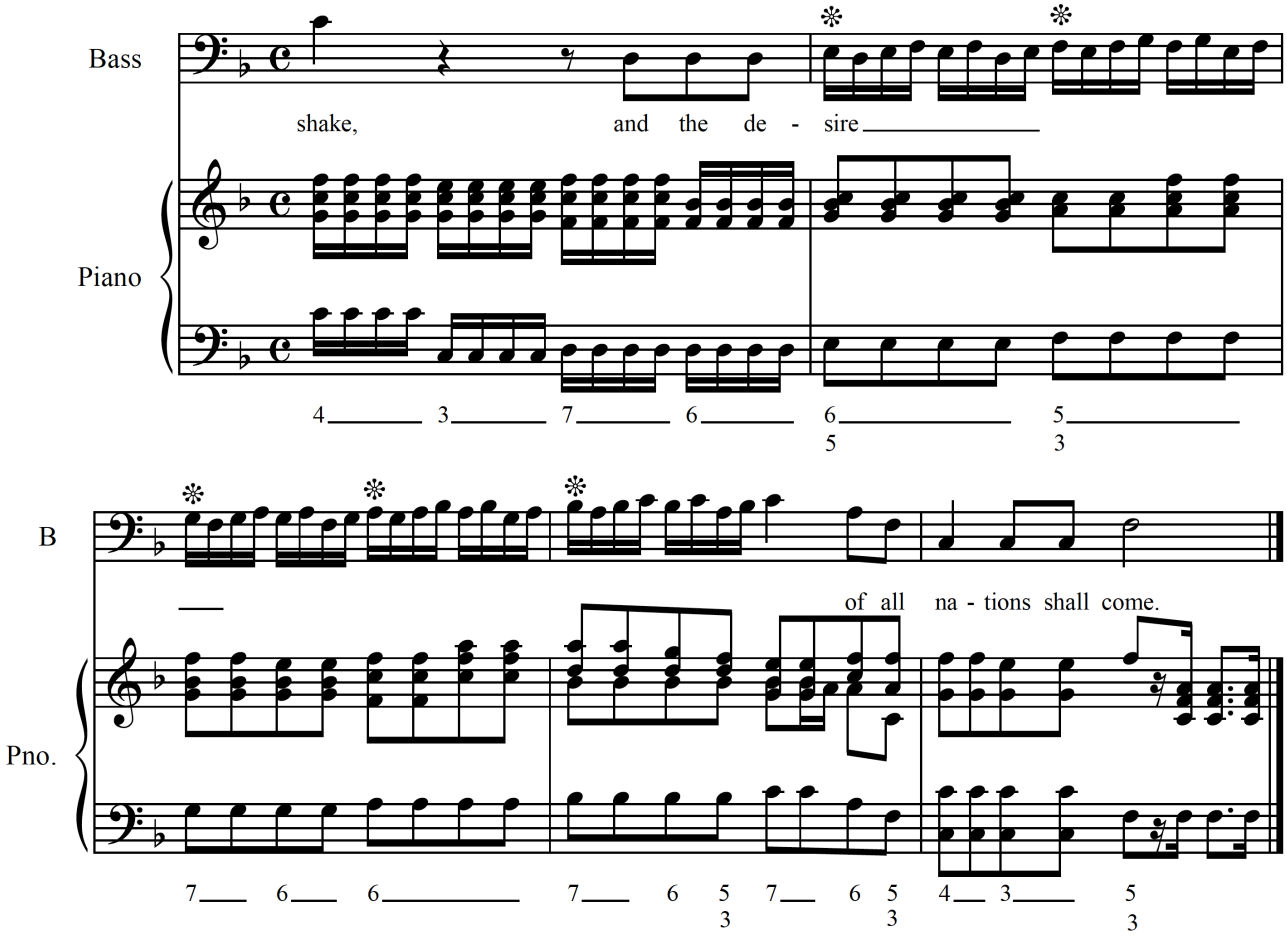
Example 20 **'Presti omai' (*Giulio Cesare),* mm. 23-30** **G. F. Handel (1685-1759)**
Passage-analysis



Example 21 **'Ich will nur dir' (*Christmas Oratorio*), mm. 13-18** **J. S. Bach (1685-1750)**
Passage-analysis



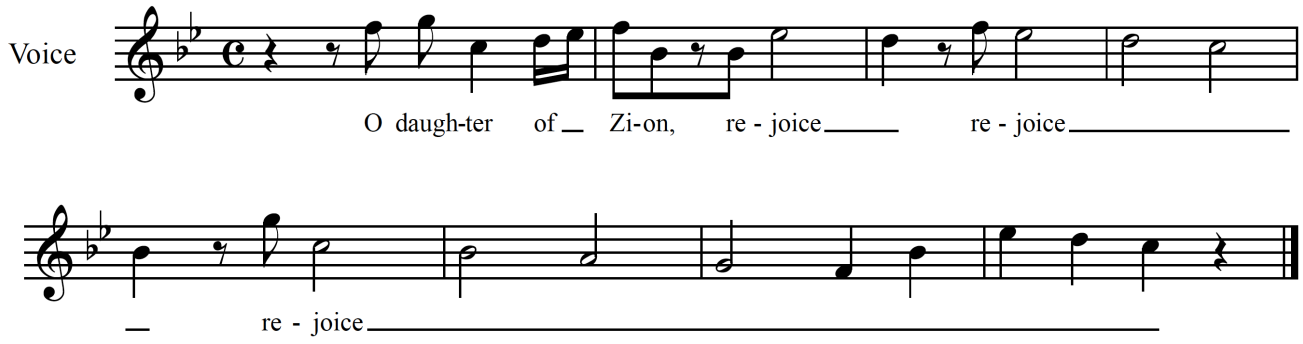
Example 22 'Thus saith the Lord' (*Messiah*), mm. 58-68 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Passage-analysis



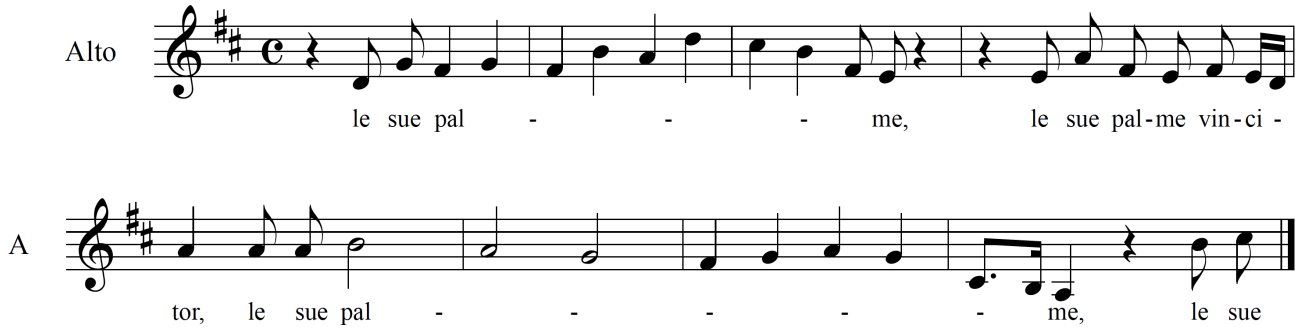
Melodic deconstruction

The next step is to do a melodic deconstruction of the passage. In almost all coloratura that is not scalar (and even in some that is), the coloratura is constructed as ornamentation of an underlying melodic line. Your harmonic analysis can assist you in finding this underlying structure, as every new harmony will normally involve a new pitch in the underlying melody. Try to decipher this line, and circle these notes (I have marked certain pitches with an asterisk in the examples above). First slowly, and gradually increasing to your ultimate (or even faster) tempo, sing this deconstructed melody. Consider how the direction of this line fits with the harmonic rhythm, and make some decisions about the macrodirection of the phrase.

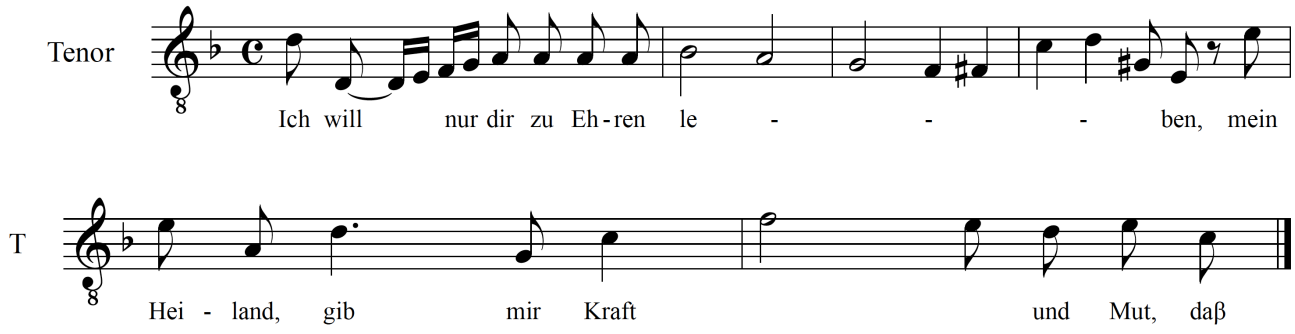
Example 23 'Rejoice greatly' (*Messiah)*, mm. 16-23 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Melodic deconstruction



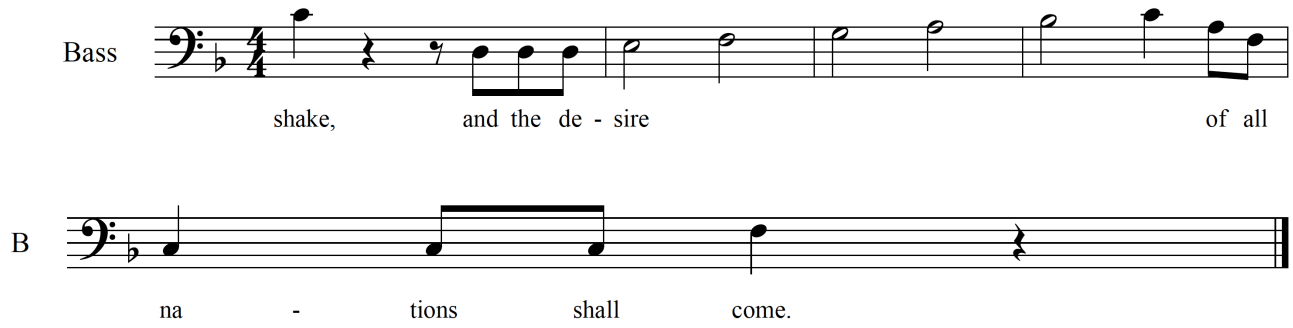
Example 24 'Presti omai' (*Giulio Cesare),* mm. 23-30 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Melodic deconstruction



Example 25 'Ich will nur dir' (*Christmas Oratorio*), mm. 23-30 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
Melodic deconstruction



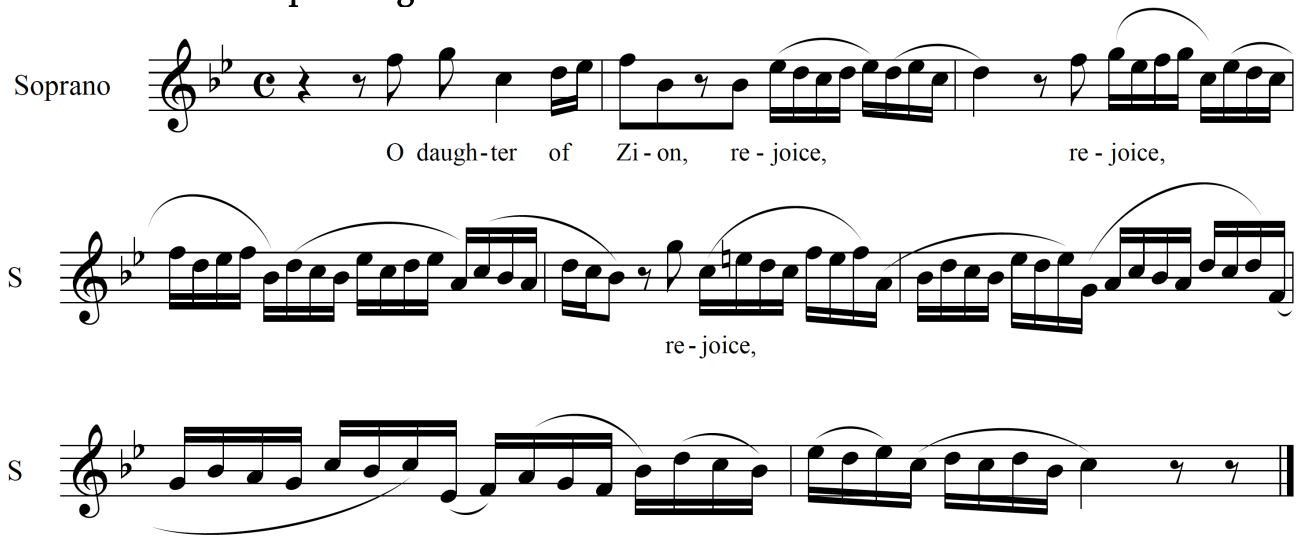
Example 26 'Thus saith the Lord' (*Messiah*), mm. 58-68 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Melodic deconstruction



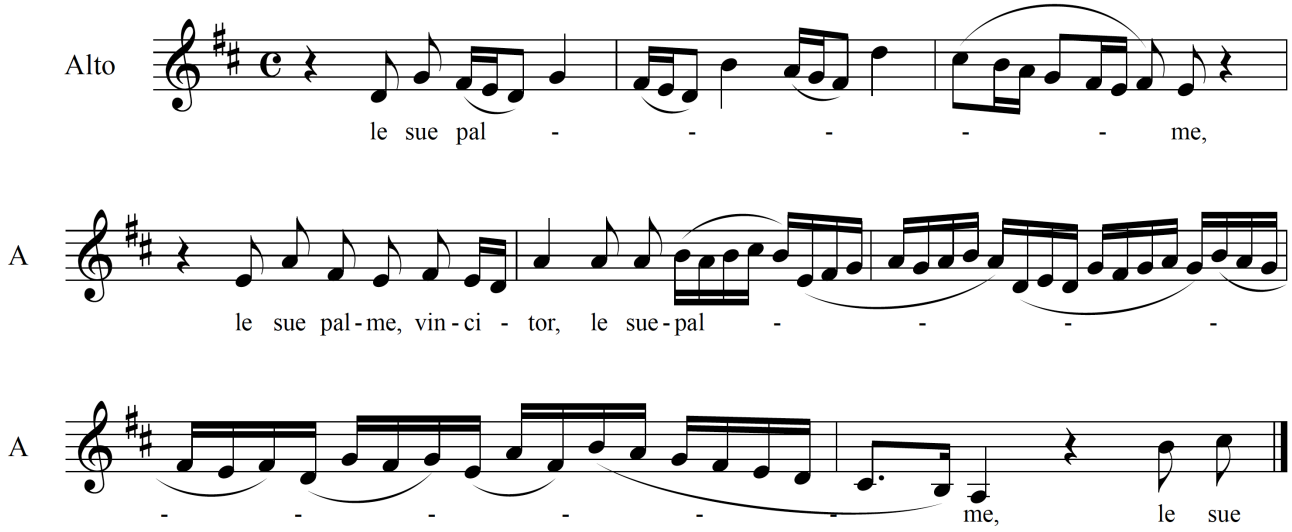
Internal phrasing

Now look again at the whole line, and try to divide it into smaller phrases, either putting phrase marks over each microphrase, or separating them with a line. These decisions can become and should be very personal (my suggestions below are by no means definitive). Your harmonic analysis and melodic deconstruction will already give you some clues as to what these phrases could be. At this stage your melodic analysis can also inform the creation of internal phrasing as it should relate to sequences, changes of direction, and stepwise versus intervallic motion. There is no rule as to how long or short a microphrase should be, and certainly the length of microphrases within a line can and should be irregular. As a general rule, however, try to create phrasings that will not accentuate main beats of the bar or high notes.

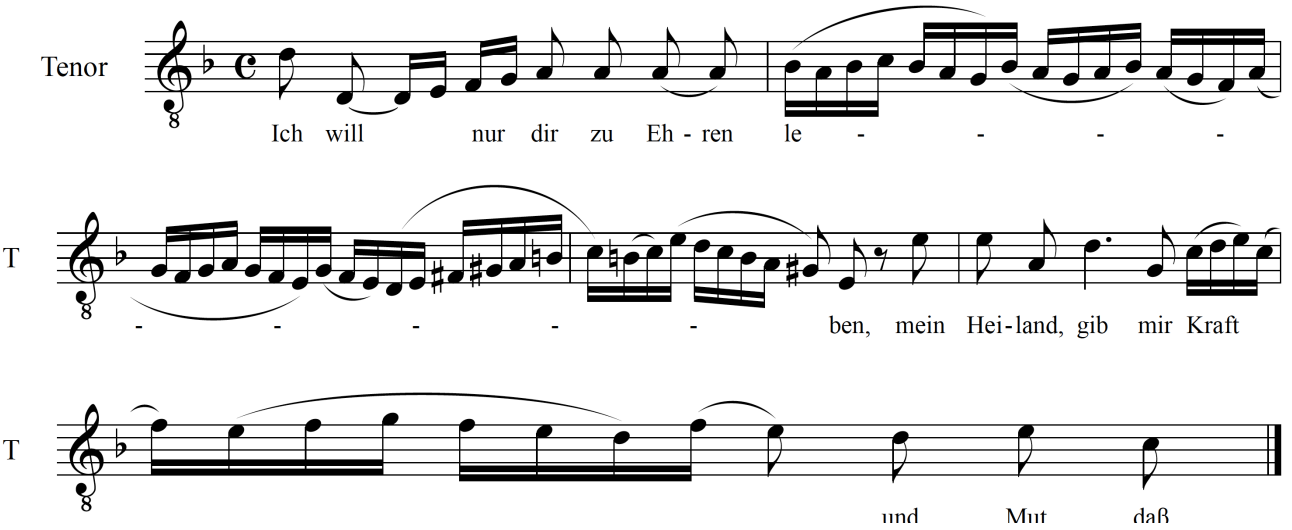
Example 27 'Rejoice greatly' (*Messiah)*, mm. 16-23 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Internal phrasing



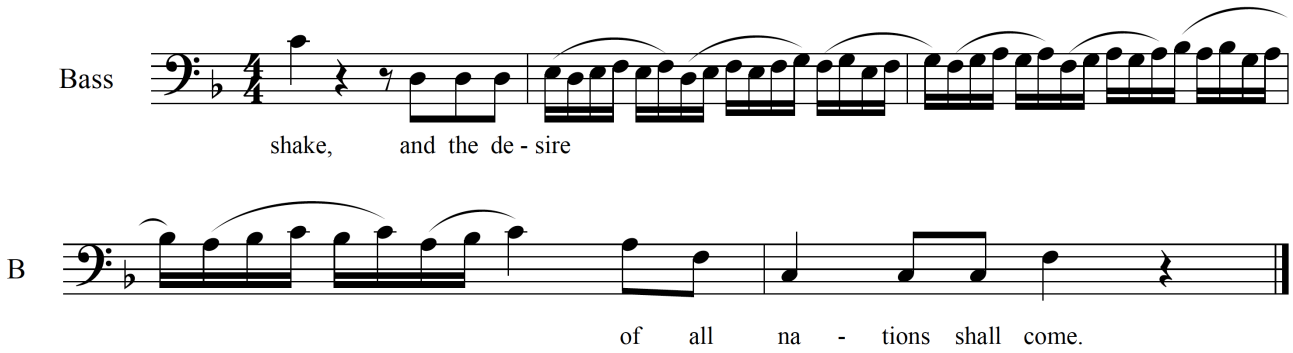
Example 28 'Presti omai' (*Giulio Cesare),* mm. 23-30 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Internal phrasing



Example 29 'Ich will nur dir' (*Christmas Oratorio*), mm. 23-30 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
Internal phrasing



Example 30 'Thus saith the Lord' (*Messiah*), mm. 58-68 G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
Internal phrasing



With all of this analysis out of the way, and with a very good idea of how you would like the coloratura to sound, it is now time to practise the microphrases that you made. Do each individually at first, and then gradually do two and more successive phrases. Each microphrase should have a shape of its own, and melodic emphasis can be made through both volume and length of the individual notes. Vary this within each microphrase, so that you have the feeling that no two successive notes are sung in the same manner, in either dynamic or length. As you sing more microphrases together, consider again your deconstructed melody, and try to feel that these pitches and the direction of this line sound clearly amidst more nuanced internal phrasing and pitch-decoration.

If you are dealing with a very extensive passage of coloratura and you require a breath but no rests are written, first try to do it in a moment where the composer has written a longer note value which you can discreetly shorten to make space to breathe. If no such opportunity is present, choose to do it between two microphrases and practise the phrasing of each to allow some extra time between them.

As you become more comfortable singing the whole passage, always be sure to sing it musically and interestingly and to remember the meaning or idea behind the word. Also always remember the basics of good technique, paying particular attention to produce a clear vowel with a relaxed jaw and tongue. Unless specifically required by the composer, always try to sing legato, and never articulate with an aspirated [h]. Try also to practise the passage at different speeds. It is always good to be ready for a conductor or a fellow musician who has a different idea of the tempo. But regardless of the tempo, always try to maintain a balance between the macrophrasing of the underlying melody and the shapes of the microphrases: the slower the tempo, the more expressive coloratura will become; the faster the tempo, the more easily you will be able to sing it.

Conclusions

At this stage you should be able to sing through the piece accurately. If you still encounter difficulties or problem spots, now is the time to pay special attention to them. If necessary, study the mechanics of the piece in combination with each other by repeating the steps presented above. This will not only save a lot of time but will ultimately improve your reading ability and facilitate your learning future pieces more quickly and efficiently. Certainly one can isolate a melody by playing it on the piano, or isolate a tricky rhythm by speaking it; however, when you begin to sing the written notes, always do so with the appropriate text, and with a steady pulse and accurate rhythm. If you encounter difficulties, then isolate the specific problem spot and practise that at a slower tempo.

A note on reading music

If you feel as though you lack confidence in reading music in general, make a habit of going through these deconstructive steps regularly and methodically on a wide range of repertoire, even if you are not planning to perform it in the foreseeable future. It is a fact that the ability to read music well is an immense benefit in the professional life of a singer. It instils confidence in yourself as well as your employers and colleagues, and it is an immense benefit when you are asked at the last minute to replace a colleague. Sight-reading is a learned skill, and while it comes more quickly to some than others, it must be a priority if one expects to have a successful professional career.

Reconstructive analysis

From deconstruction to reconstruction

Once one has a clear understanding of how a piece is constructed, which the exercises above have aimed to demonstrate, the next step is to teach the brain and body how to realize the music in sound: the brain to have a knowledge of what needs to be done, the body to have the means to do it. The following exercises have one aim: to internalize the score's technical and musical demands. On one hand this is to train and strengthen vocal execution of the music; on the other, to instil a loyalty to the musical expressivity inherent in the score. In short, after one deconstructs a piece, it is then necessary to put it back together again in performance.

I shall divide exercises into four principal categories: breath, vowels, consonants, and resonance. While the first aim of a specific exercise may focus on the relevant category, it should be remembered that other issues may also be addressed simultaneously. Below every exercise title is a code which lists, in order of relevance, the various elements it is intended to strengthen (first technical and then musical). Also, in the appendix is a list of the elements themselves which cross-reference (again in order of relevance) the exercises that may best address that issue.

The exercises as presented here become successively less elaborate, with the idea that a singer is gradually moving from learning a piece in bits and pieces to performance of the whole work. While many of the issues dealt with early on will be readdressed in a subsequent exercise, it is imperative that a singer successfully apply an exercise in his or her preparation of a piece or passage before letting it go completely. This is not to say that one cannot do other exercises along the way, but rather that an exercise that gives difficulty should be revisited until the technical or musical problems that it reveals have been fixed. That being said, no singer should feel obliged to do the following exercises in the order in which I present them here. Indeed, one should never allow too much frustration to arise in learning a piece of music; therefore always find a good balance between that which is challenging and that which comes easily.

I shall try to avoid ideas of musical style, as these would inevitably be biased to my personal taste. Sense of style and taste can only be developed through experience in listening and doing. This is the case even in styles that are researched in the discipline of historical performance practices. That being said, issues of style are often inherent in what I address, but I hope these can be accepted as almost universal rules of singing.

A preliminary comment on memorization

Though memorization of a specific piece may not be a requirement, I would argue that you cannot claim to have fully internalized a piece either technically or musically until the piece is memorized. This is a rather ironic statement for a book whose very title places the score as central; however, ultimate musical expression always demands a separation from the physical score itself. It is not that the score is absent, but rather that the details of that score have been translated into a physical and emotional reality. I shall suggest some exercises for memorization at the end of this section, but you can greatly assist with this process by beginning to memorize during the course of each exercise. It is my intention that all of these exercises be done whilst observing yourself in a mirror. Such work not only allows you to see that you are executing the exercise correctly, but, by keeping your eyes on yourself rather than on the music, immediately stimulates your memory. If you commit to mastering all of these exercises, and spend more time looking at yourself in the mirror than at the score during this process, you will most likely find that you ultimately have the piece memorized without the need for further work.

Breath

Mastering breathing and breath-support in singing can often be one of the greatest challenges for a singer. This clearly is not because the act of breathing itself is a complicated process, but rather because the muscular co-ordination required in the breathing-singing connection is so different from the process we employ in speech. We are taught in singing to maintain the position of inhalation when we begin to phonate, and to maintain this expanded sensation for the duration of the phrase; however, the fact remains that the area that has expanded with air will necessarily contract as soon as air leaves the body. Thus, in training efficient breath-support we are constantly faced with the paradox that what we should think and feel is contrary to the physiological reality of the breath cycle.

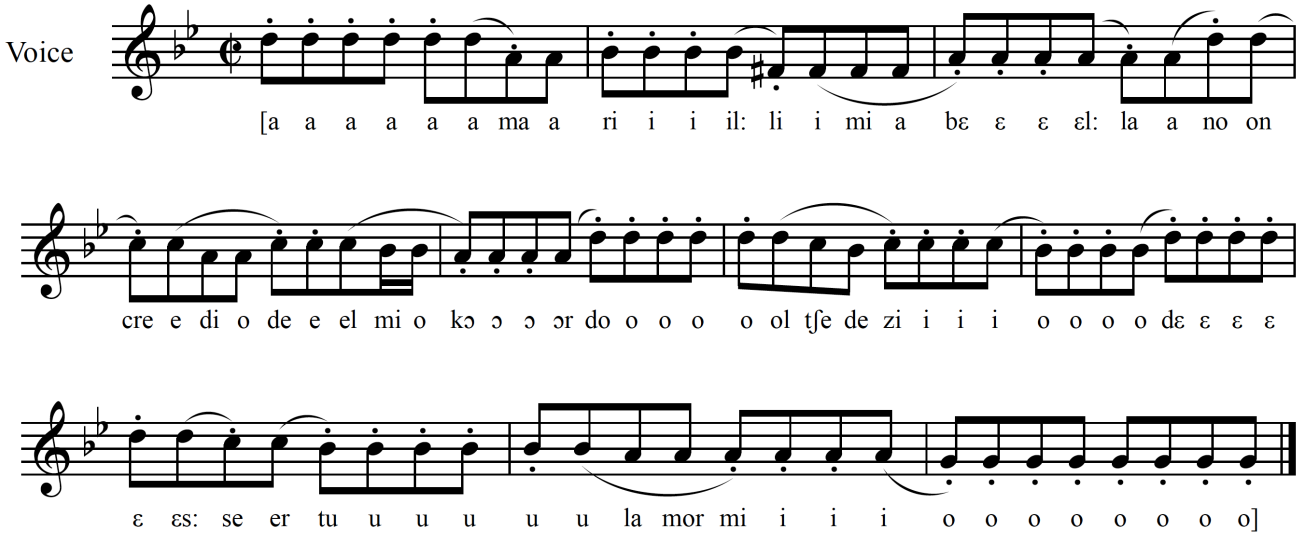
B1. Breath-renewal

breath; vowel; consonant; legato; onset; intonation; resonance
pulse; rhythm; diction; pitch

One useful way to train breath-support for a complete phrase is to allow the body to experience the singing of every note with full breath-support, and that can best be achieved with the breath-renewal exercise. In the breath-renewal exercise you deal with one musical phrase at a time, or with one musical line that you would ultimately like to perform in one breath. A graphic explanation can often be more instructive in learning this exercise, so I intersperse several examples with commentary to illustrate what I intend. To execute the breath-renewal exercise, begin by choosing a subdivision of the beat, usually beginning with the smallest subdivision employed in the phrase itself.

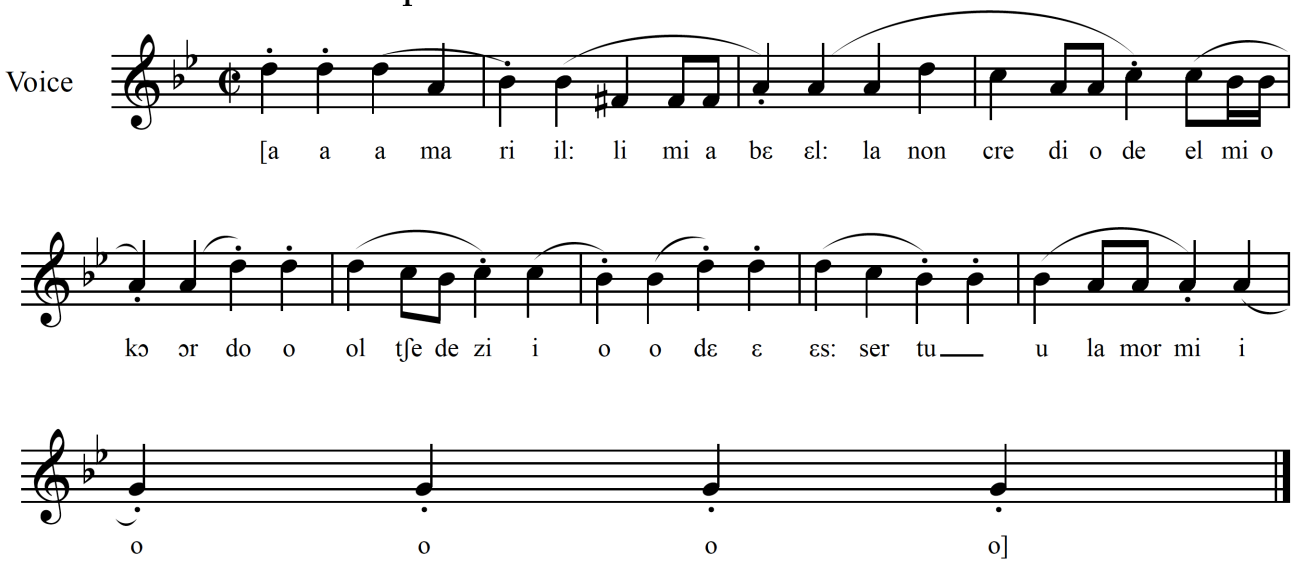
Before beginning the phrase be certain to take a full breath, and then be certain on every breath-renewal to take in only enough air to regain the initial amount. Especially in a high subdivision, it is very easy to overcrowd the lungs by inhaling more than you have expired in singing. Most importantly, while the abdominal area will be incredibly active during the execution of the subdivided phrase, you must be certain that the abdominal muscles are neither hyper- nor hypoactive, and that the proper postures of the body, head, and larynx are maintained. Be particularly careful to keep the jaw and tongue still and relaxed on every note's onset, duration, release, breath-renewal, and subsequent onset.

Example 31 Amarilli, mia bella, mm. 1-10 Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)
Breath-renewal eighth-note subdivision



In this phrase I have written out the application of the breath-renewal exercise beginning with eighth-notes. In executing the exercise, one should renew the breath (take a small breath) after every note marked staccato. No breath should be taken between notes marked with a slur. The text has been transcribed in IPA. This clarifies the continuity of the vowel in addition to the placement of the consonants. In this specific example (and those following) I have transcribed a traditional interpretation of vowel distribution in songs with Italian texts: that two vowels on one written note are divided over a division between that note ('mia' in m. 2, and 'mio' in m. 4).

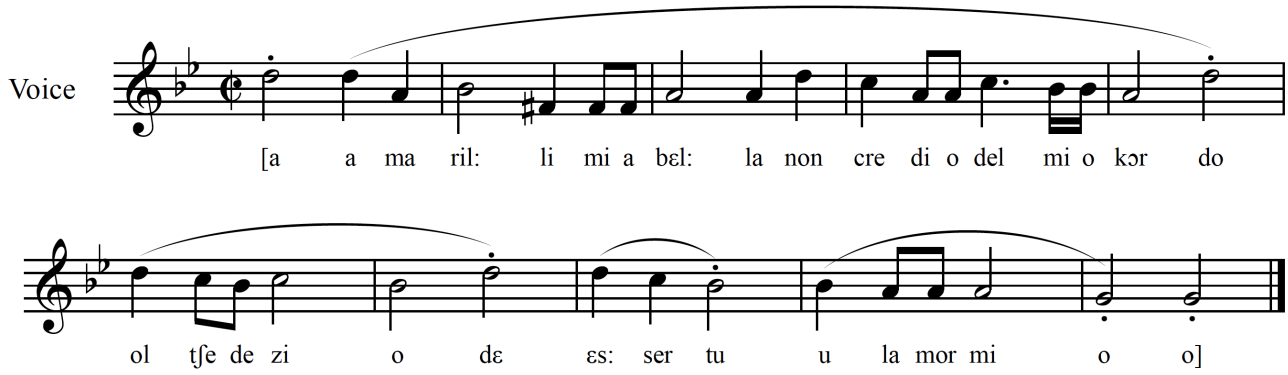
Example 32 Amarilli, mia bella, mm. 1-10 Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)
Breath-renewal quarter-note subdivision



In example 32 we repeat the breath-renewal exercise progressing one rhythmic unit larger (in this case from an eighth-note to a quarter-note subdivision). The basic principle of notation is the same, but those parts of the phrase that are the same as or smaller than the subdivided unit appear in their original form. Note that the exercise as written omits breaths where you will likely choose to take one in the end (this will be addressed later).

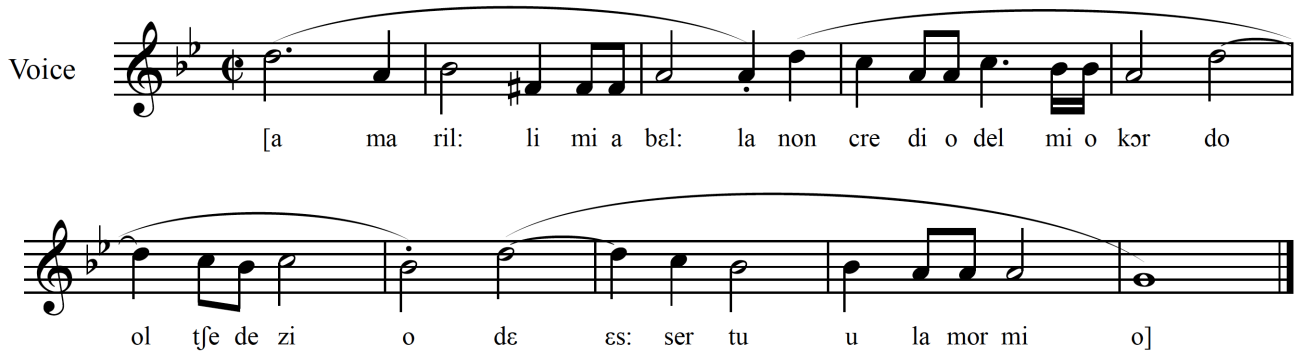
In the next step we make the subdivision one unit larger. At this stage we clearly move from very short phrases to very long ones.

Example 33 Amarilli, mia bella, mm. 1-10 Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)
Breath-renewal half-note subdivision

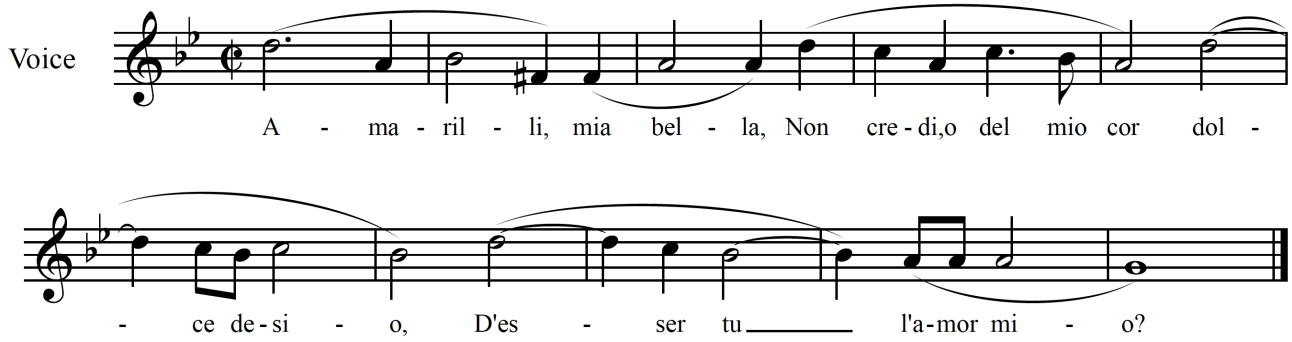


Again we have not yet included logical moments of breath; however, by progressing to the final unit of subdivision (whole note – which in this example would have the same result as the preceding example) we will now include them.

Example 34 Amarilli, mia bella, mm. 1-10 Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)
Breath-renewal whole-note subdivision with final breath decisions



Example 35 Amarilli, mia bella, mm. 1-10 Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)
Original notation with phrasing variation (vocal line only)



I offer two suggestions for phrasing above as these are highly subjective decisions, and both approaches are equally valuable interpretations that connect well with the natural musical flow of the vocal line as well as with the textual structure (punctuation and meaning). Ultimately these phrase lengths are variable – but keep in mind an underlying sense of pulse suitable to the time signature or tempo indication of the composer, and remember that longer or shorter phrase lengths do not necessarily entail a faster or slower tempo.

This exercise requires a great deal of concentration to execute correctly and healthfully, especially at the beginning. The basic premise of doing it is to experience the full breath and associated expanded position for every note of the phrase. By gradually diminishing the subdivision while continuing to renew the breath, you are training the body to maintain the position following inhalation during phonation. The training of this sensation gradually makes it more familiar than the natural inclination for the muscles of inhalation to contract. As a result, it leads to better breath-support when you sing the phrase in one breath even though there is less air in your body.

Thankfully, as the length of time and concentration that this exercise requires is significant, the benefits of this exercise extend far beyond the training of the breathing and breath-support systems. Since the exercise is designed to always connect changes of pitch and syllable, it is very useful in the development of legato lines and intervallic accuracy. Moreover, as the breath-renewal occurs within specific syllables, the exercise also benefits the clarity of vowels and the placement of diphthongs.

In learning the structure of the piece, this exercise is invaluable in ensuring rhythmic precision. Even if one may eventually prefer to treat the rhythms more freely (as in recitative), this exercise will often point out some of the relative rhythmic nuance that the composer envisioned. The sequence of subdivisions can also be very instructive when there are complicated rhythmic groupings. In such cases, one can isolate the exercise to one or two beats, particularly if these beats involve irregular rhythmic subdivisions of five or more.

To summarize the breath-renewal reconstruction process:

Step 1:

Choose an initial subdivision for the phrase, normally the shortest (or second shortest) note value.

Step 2:

Recompose the phrase mentally so that any note longer than the chosen subdivision is divided into a succession of the subdivided note values. The phrase then becomes a continuous succession of the subdivided note value with the occasional new syllable.

Step 3:

Sing the new phrase at a comfortable (slower) tempo, renewing the breath between all of the notes that you have added in the subdividing process. Between any change of pitch or syllable sing legato (without breathing).

Step 4:

Repeat steps 2-3 with the next longer subdivision (e.g. sixteenth-note – eighth-note; eighth-note – quarter-note, etc.). At this point some notes will not be able to be subdivided equally, so also renew the breath before every subdivision within the bar if it does not coincide with a change of pitch or syllable (that is, if a note is tied over a beat or bar line).

Step 5:

Continue to repeat step 4 (and at successively faster tempi) until there are no further subdivisions available (generally this means your subdivision is at the level of a full bar).

Penultimate step:

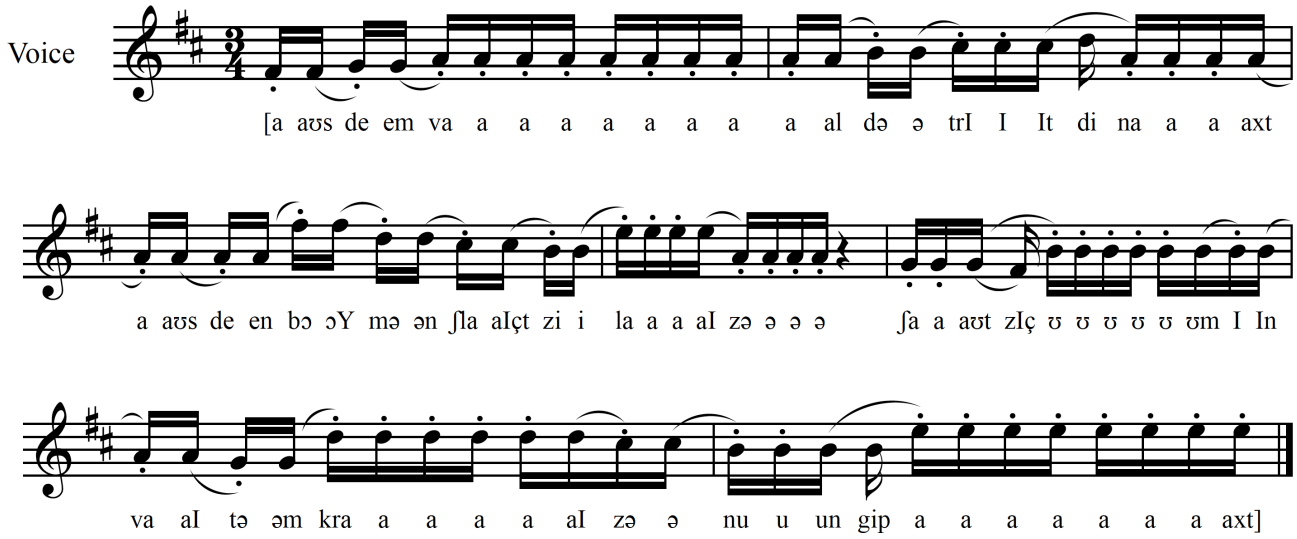
Repeat all preceding steps for each phrase in the piece.

Final step:

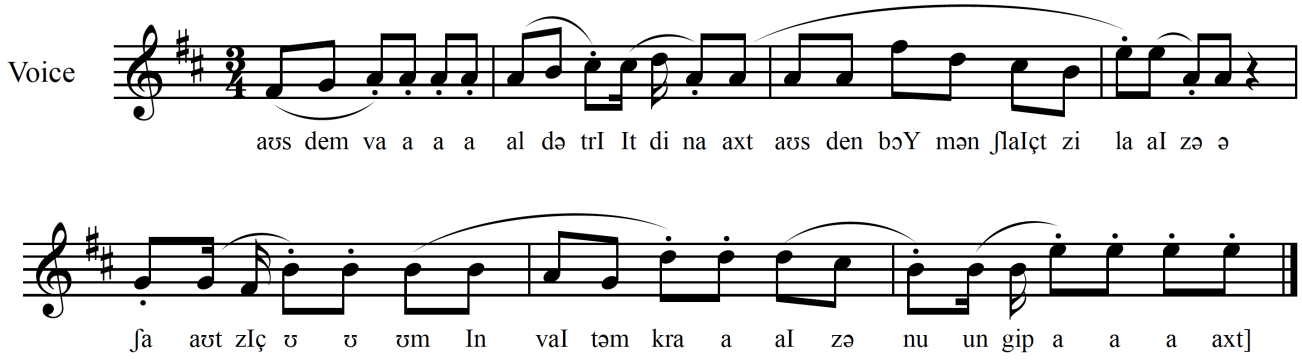
Decide where you will breathe within or between phrases if this is not already clearly marked with a rest. Sing the piece through completely at your ideal performance tempo. Try to maintain the feeling of singing with a full breath under each note, and pay attention to vocalic accuracy, consonant-placement, and correct rhythm.

Below I have written out the breath-renewal process for some phrases of 'Die Nacht'.

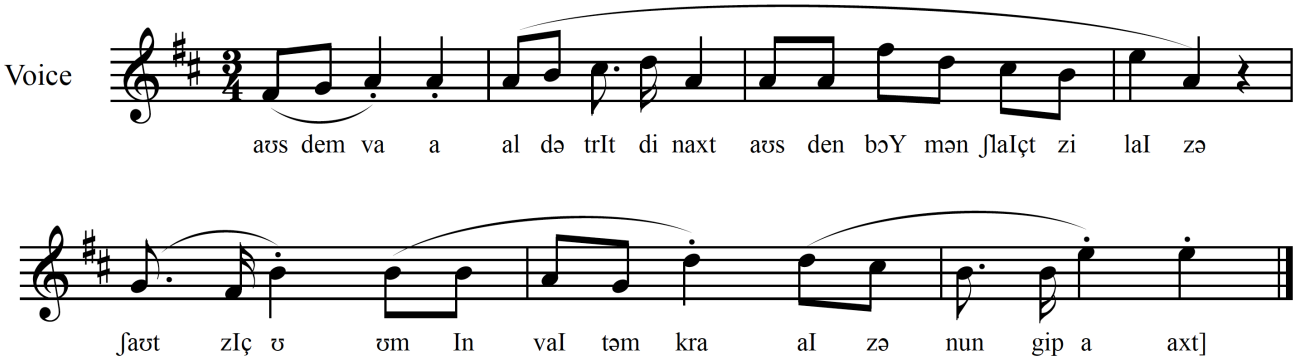
Example 36 Die Nacht, mm. 2-8 **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Breath-renewal sixteenth-note subdivision



Example 37 Die Nacht, mm. 2-8 **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Breath-renewal eighth-note subdivision



Example 38 Die Nacht, mm. 2-8 **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Breath-renewal quarter-note subdivision



B2. Onset-release

onset; breath; consonants; legato; resonance
diction; rhythm

Onset and release are generally the terms used when referring to the technicality of phrase beginnings and endings. As important as these moments are both musically and technically, it is also true that every note in the middle of a phrase has a beginning and ending of its own, particularly where consonants are involved. While the arrival at and departure from notes within a phrase do not require the same co-ordination of inhalation or breath-renewal as first and last notes, they do still require full support and technical accuracy.

The onset-release exercise is intended to focus one's attention on the clarity of syllable divisions in general, with special attention being paid to voiced consonants. As we learned earlier in 'Vocal analysis', voiced consonants should be pitched on the same note as their relative vowel. Aside from its importance from a musical point of view (scooping is rarely praised in classical singing), precision in the production and pitch of consonants usually leads to improved resonance and a well-supported legato line.

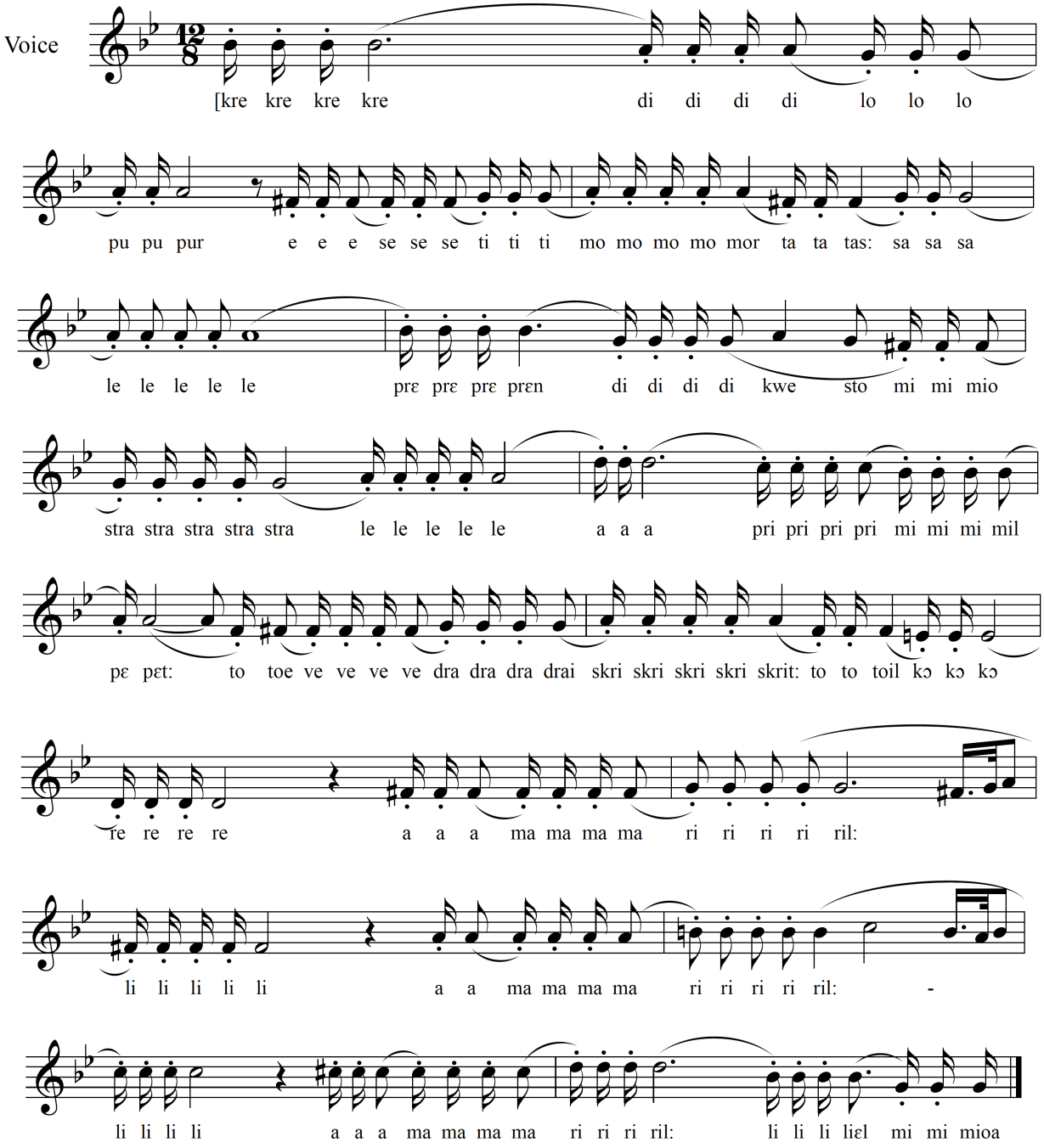
The exercise itself is very similar to the breath-renewal exercise; however, here one should focus more on the consonant(s) of every syllable change rather than the vowel within a syllable. In short, the focus here is the beginnings and endings rather than the middle. The technical principle is the same: to allow the body to experience every consonant with full support. The execution is somewhat different, however, and does not require the same complex recomposing as before.

The exercise only needs to be employed where a consonant exists, and the number of repetitions is highly variable depending on the difficulty of the consonant(s) encountered. The basic principle is to sing the piece in tempo, but the onset of every new syllable should be repeated 2-4 times, with intermittent breath-renewals before continuing. Where a change of syllable involves only a change of vowel or an unvoiced consonant, one may decide to repeat the change only once or not at all. When the consonants are at the end of a syllable, one can also make personal decisions about the number of times it is necessary to repeat it, or whether it should be treated in combination with the following syllable.

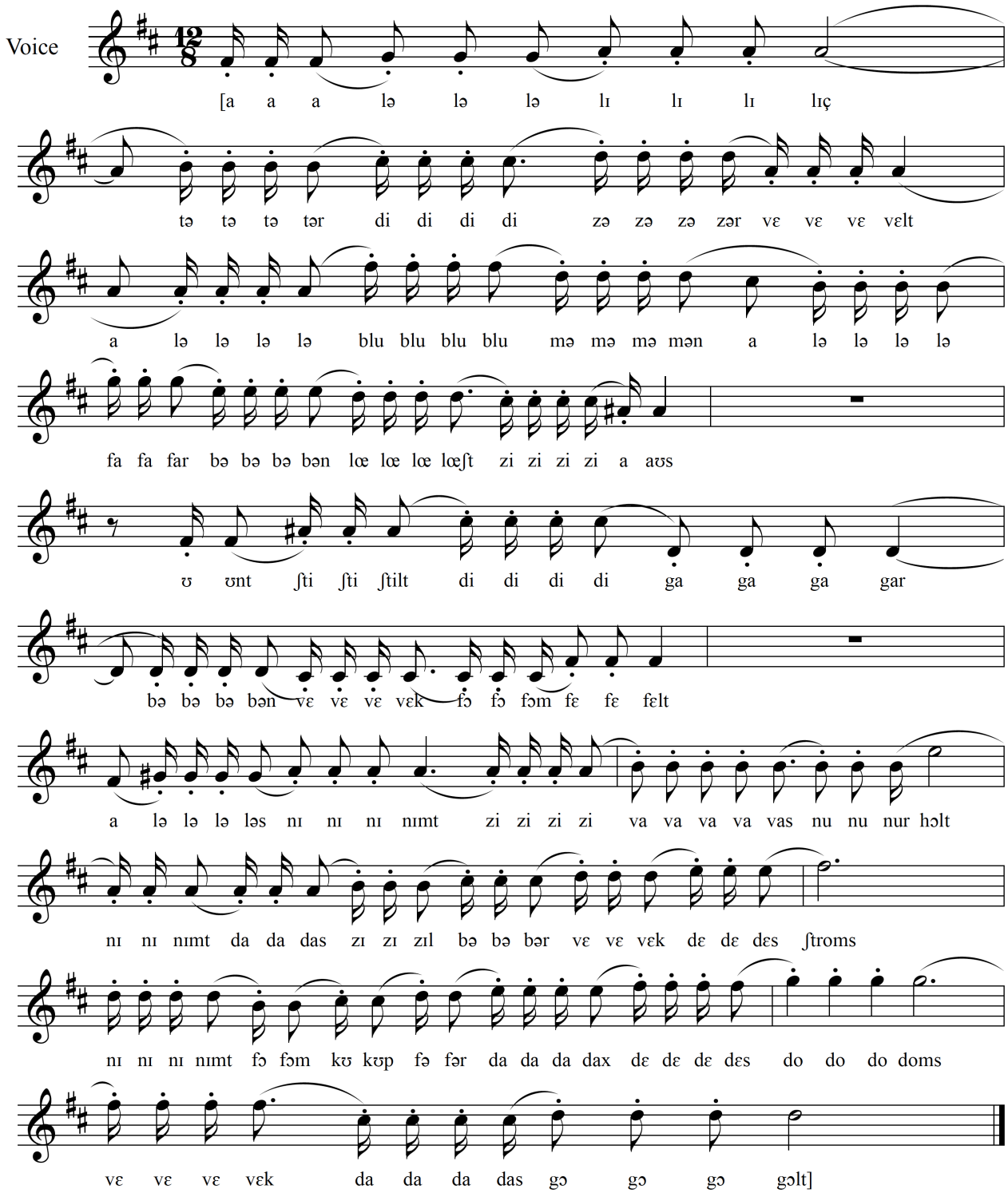
During this process one can gain a better appreciation of the details of text-setting. At this point, one should take note of details such as where glottal stops are required and where double consonants exist (either stopped or continuants), and decide how these should be executed (in particular on which pitches they should sound if voiced, and where elision of consonants is necessary). This exercise will also point out where there is a tendency to clip a vowel which is followed by a nasal consonant. The important point is that the consonants be produced accurately and healthfully, sound on the correct pitch where necessary, and create a smooth transition between the adjacent vowels.

In the examples below I employ the same system of notation as in the breath-renewal exercise above (text in IPA, staccato marks indicate a subsequent breath renewal, slur marks indicate no breath). The length of notes marked staccato need not be as strict in timing as in the breath-renewal exercise, but try to be precise with the 'normal' notes. In other words, the added notes (after which one renews the breath) may be out of time, but the 'real' notes (values equal to what is in the score) should be in real time; the result will be incredibly irregular measure lengths during the course of the exercise.

Example 39 Amarilli, mia bella, mm. 11-25 **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Onset-release



Example 40 Die Nacht, mm. 18-32 **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Onset-release



B3. Inhalation

breath; intonation; resonance
rhythm

This exercise deals with the traditional moments of 'onset' and 'release', but with a focus on the support of final notes and the length of time required to breathe for a subsequent phrase. The length of time available to breathe between phrases is highly variable. At the beginning of a piece or after several bars of rest one can clearly make a choice of how long and fast one's inhalation will be. In such circumstances one should always do what works best individually to best express the particular affect of the music. Within a piece, the range of time allowed for inhalation is always changing. When we are lucky the composer has written rests; when we are less lucky the points for inhalation are only implied and we must make decisions to shorten certain notes to allow time to breathe. In all circumstances we must gauge the length of time we are permitted to breathe, and then pace the intake of air accordingly.

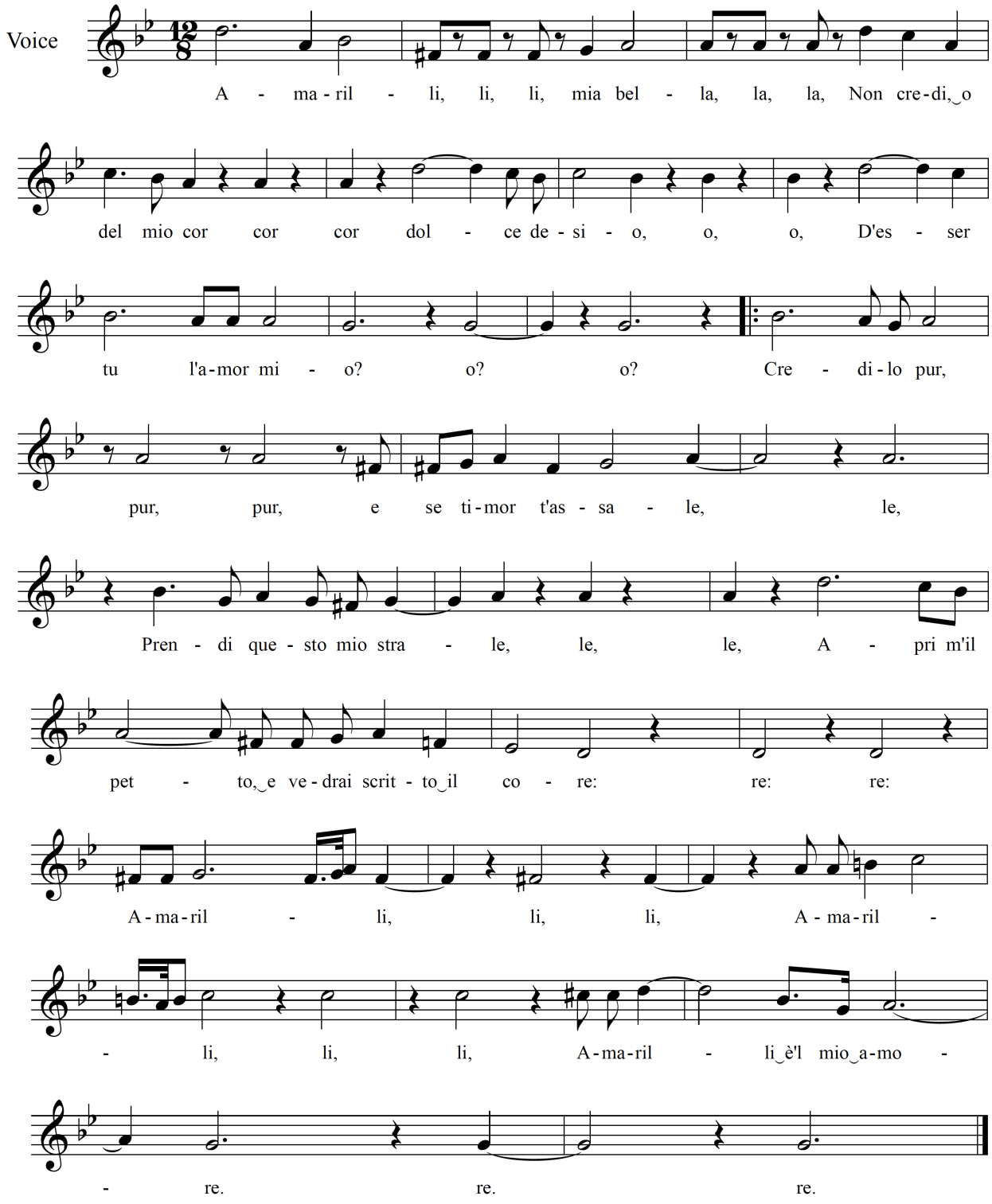
As in the two preceding exercises, the focus will be on the repetition of notes, but here we only repeat the final note. The difference is that the repetition here will also encompass the subsequent 'real' breath required in the context of the piece. Like the breath-renewal exercise, the inhalation exercise often requires some complex mental recomposition, as the combination of final note and subsequent breath can often be highly irregular rhythmically.

The basic principle of executing this exercise is very simple. Sing the piece through normally, but at every phrase-ending repeat the final note 2-4 times. Before each repetition of the final note inhale in the length of time allowed before the subsequent phrase.

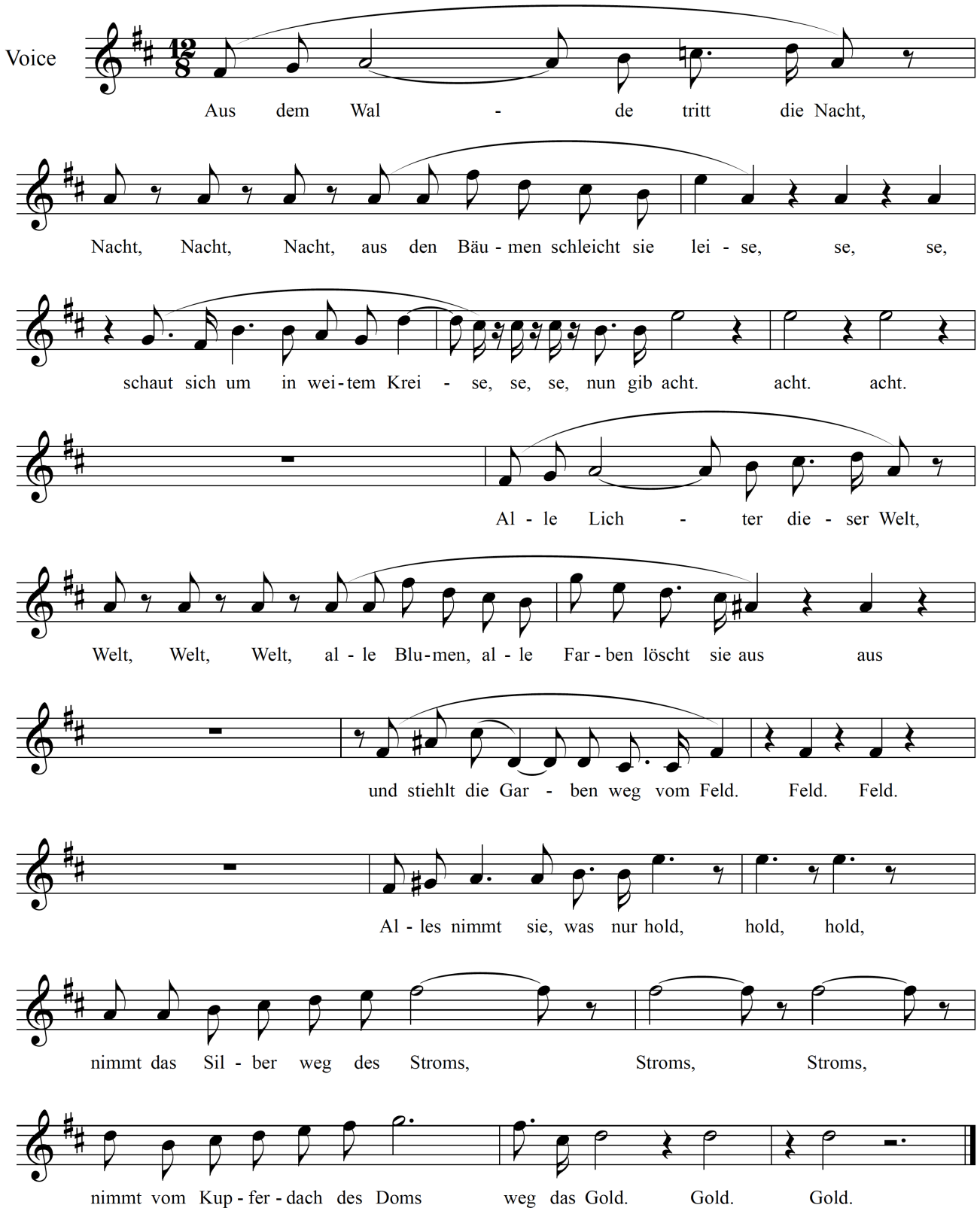
The basic purpose of this exercise is to teach the body the feeling of a well-supported final note and an easy and healthy breath for each phrase-beginning. Especially after long phrases one may find that the first breath after the last note is more difficult. Certainly, the amount of air required after a long phrase will be greater than after the final note in isolation; however, the focus here is on the feeling of support on the last note itself and the calmness in the body during the inhalation for the subsequent phrase. If and when the body will ultimately require a greater intake of air in the context of the piece as a whole, this will come much more easily and naturally with the inhalation training.

In the examples below each rest indicates not only a length of time between notes, but also the length of the breath required for the following phrase. Aim to inhale during the full duration of each rest, and repeat the final note-inhalation pair as many times as it takes to feel a well-supported final note and a calm and quiet inhalation.

Example 41 Amarilli, mia bella, mm. 1-27 **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Inhalation



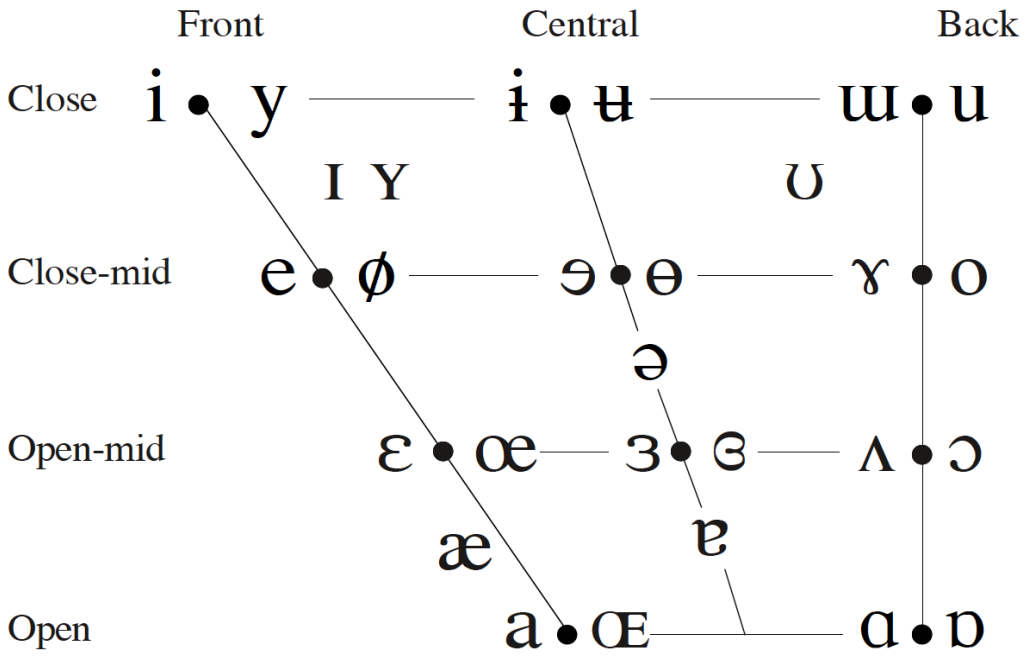
Example 42 Die Nacht, mm. 2-24 **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Inhalation



Vowels

Singing's very nature is characterized by the elongation of vowels on defined pitches. As we have seen, many consonants are singable; however, in classical singing it is rare for consonants to be elongated much more than in normal speech. Vowel-precision is not only imperative for the communication of text, but also in creating and sustaining a clean legato line. Indeed improving clarity of vowels and legato singing are the two purposes in executing the vowels-only exercise. This exercise will also assist in learning the correct formation of those vowels that are not formed by the tongue alone. Such 'vowel-combinations' include all of the rounded vowels, and all of the nasal vowels. An understanding of IPA is essential here, as the symbols often give clear cues as to the actuality of vowel-formation.

Example 43 Chart of International Phonetic Alphabet vowel symbols produced by the International Phonetic Association



In addition to the vowels in the chart above, there are also the French nasal vowels, indicated as follows:

ɑ̃ ɔ̃ ɛ̃ œ̃

V1. Vowels only

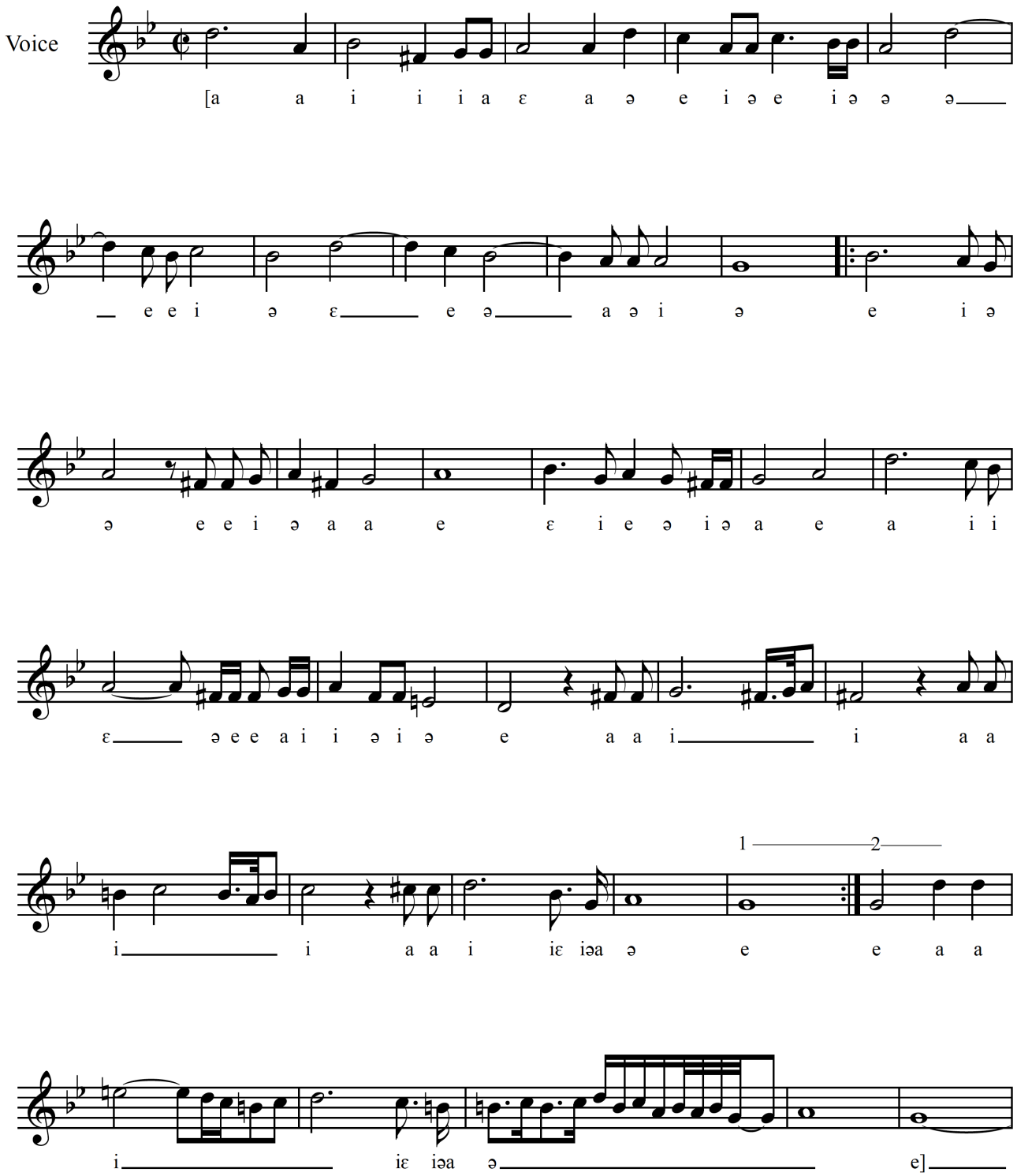
vowels; legato; resonance
diction

As is the case with earlier tasks seen above, the vowels-only exercise requires that the singer mentally recompose each musical phrase. One may feel confident enough in his or her vowel-production to simply sing a phrase omitting the consonants and focus on maintaining well-balanced resonance and musical fluidity throughout a phrase. My experience, however, is that certain vowels impede the ultimate goals required in legato singing by the very nature of their production and acoustical principles.

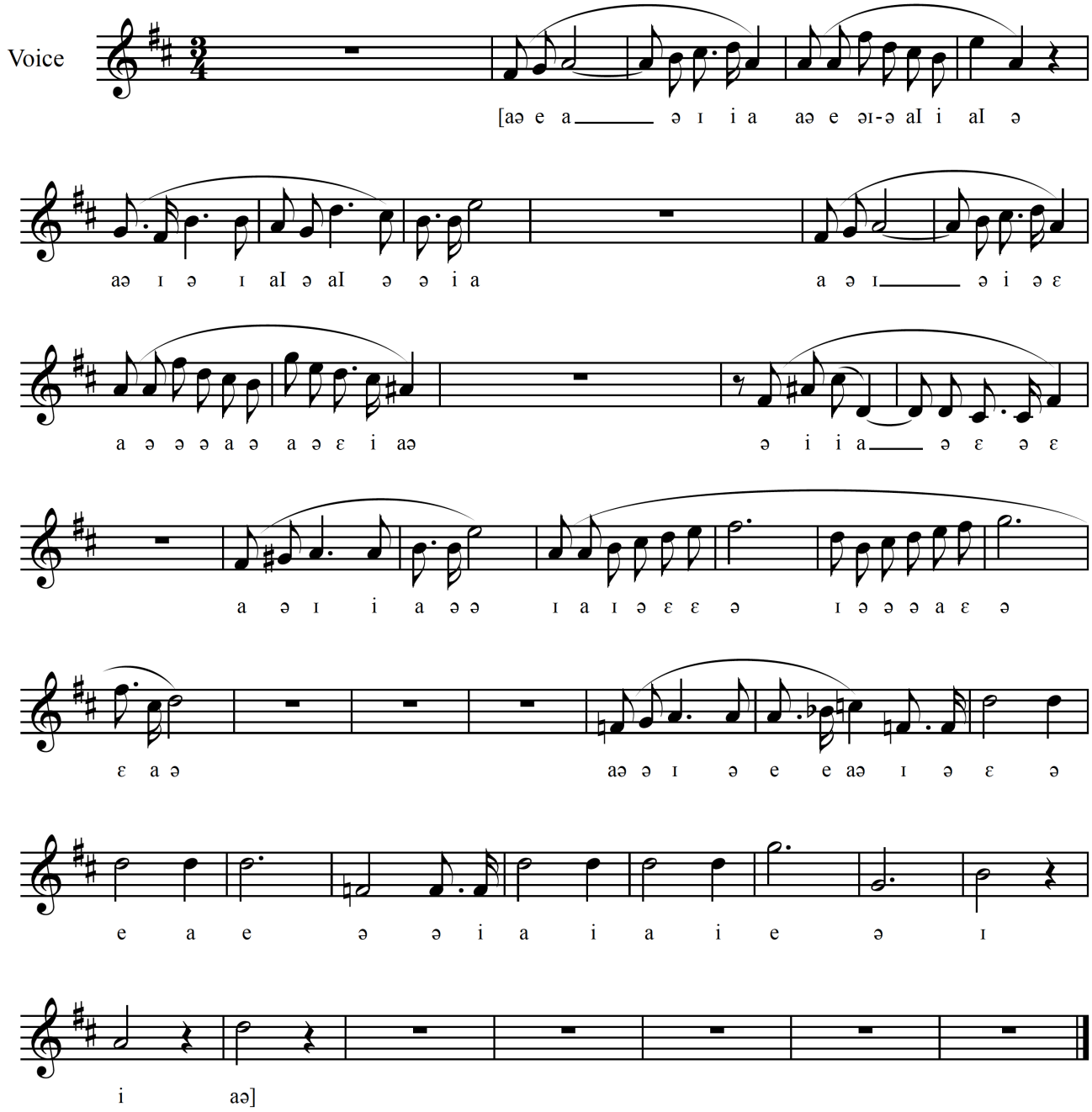
The first step in the vowels-only exercise is to sing the phrase only on non-rounded and non-nasal vowels. Where a rounded vowel exists (for our purposes focus on the front and back rounded vowels in the chart above) the singer should replace it by its non-rounded equivalent. This is fairly straightforward in the case of the front vowels, as both the non-rounded and rounded vowels are commonly used in Western languages. For the back vowels (specifically [u], [ʊ] and [o]) the non-rounded partner may pose difficulties to the singer. For this reason I would recommend replacing these with the neutral vowel [ə], with the understanding that what is essential in this process is that the tongue remain relaxed and that it will naturally change position when the lips move. Where non-rounded nasal vowels exist, sing the non-nasal equivalent (e.g. [ã] becomes [a]). Where a rounded nasal vowel exists, you must take two steps back, first to the non-nasalized counterpart, and then to the non-rounded counterpart (e.g. [õ] becomes [o] which becomes [ə]).

Repeat this stage until it is possible to sing the phrase at the correct tempo with all of the appropriate vowel changes.

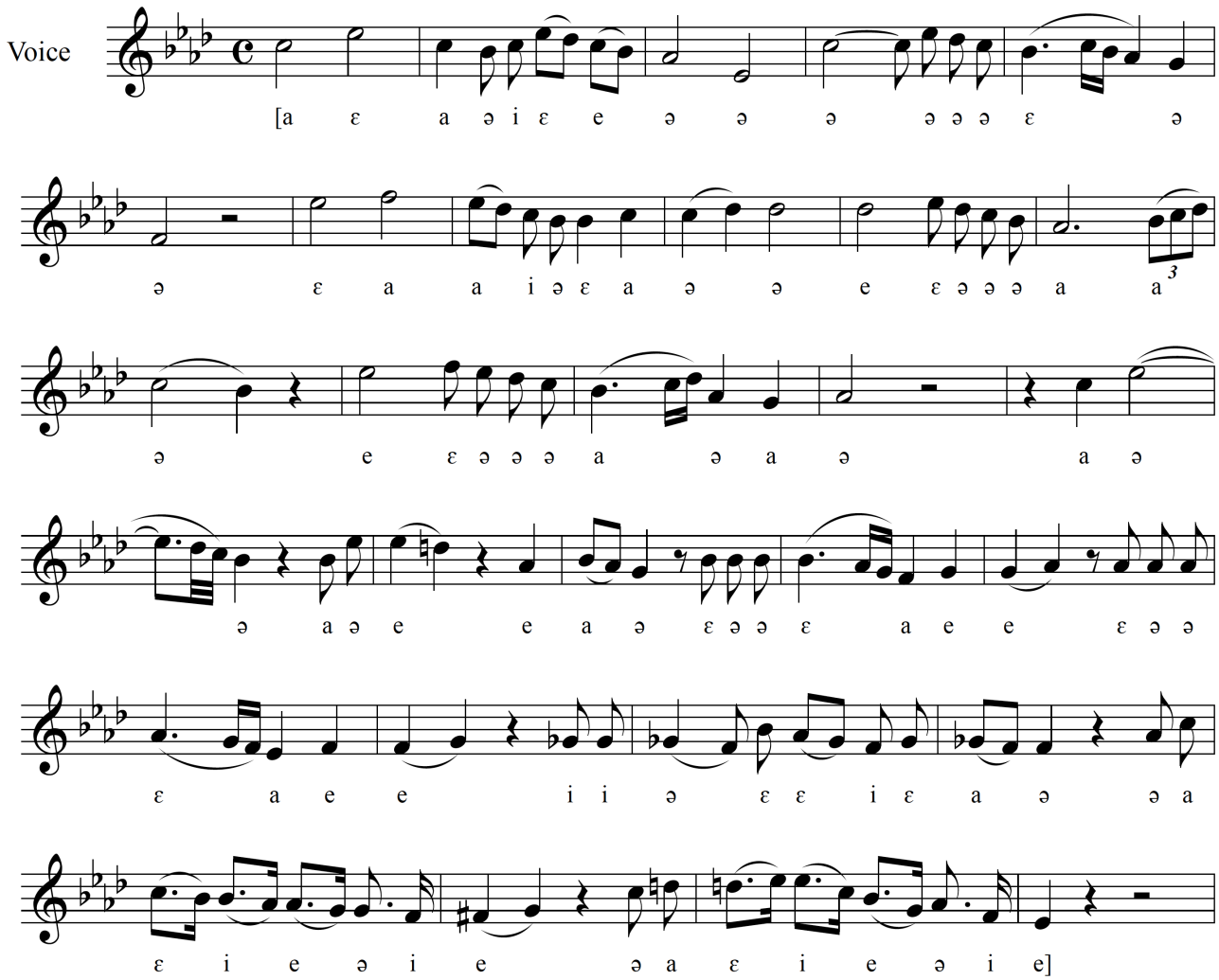
Example 44 Amarilli, mia bella **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Vowels only – without rounding lips



Example 45 Die Nacht **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Vowels only – without rounding lips



Example 46 Dans un bois solitaire, mm. 1-29* **W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)**
Vowels only – without rounding lips and without nasality

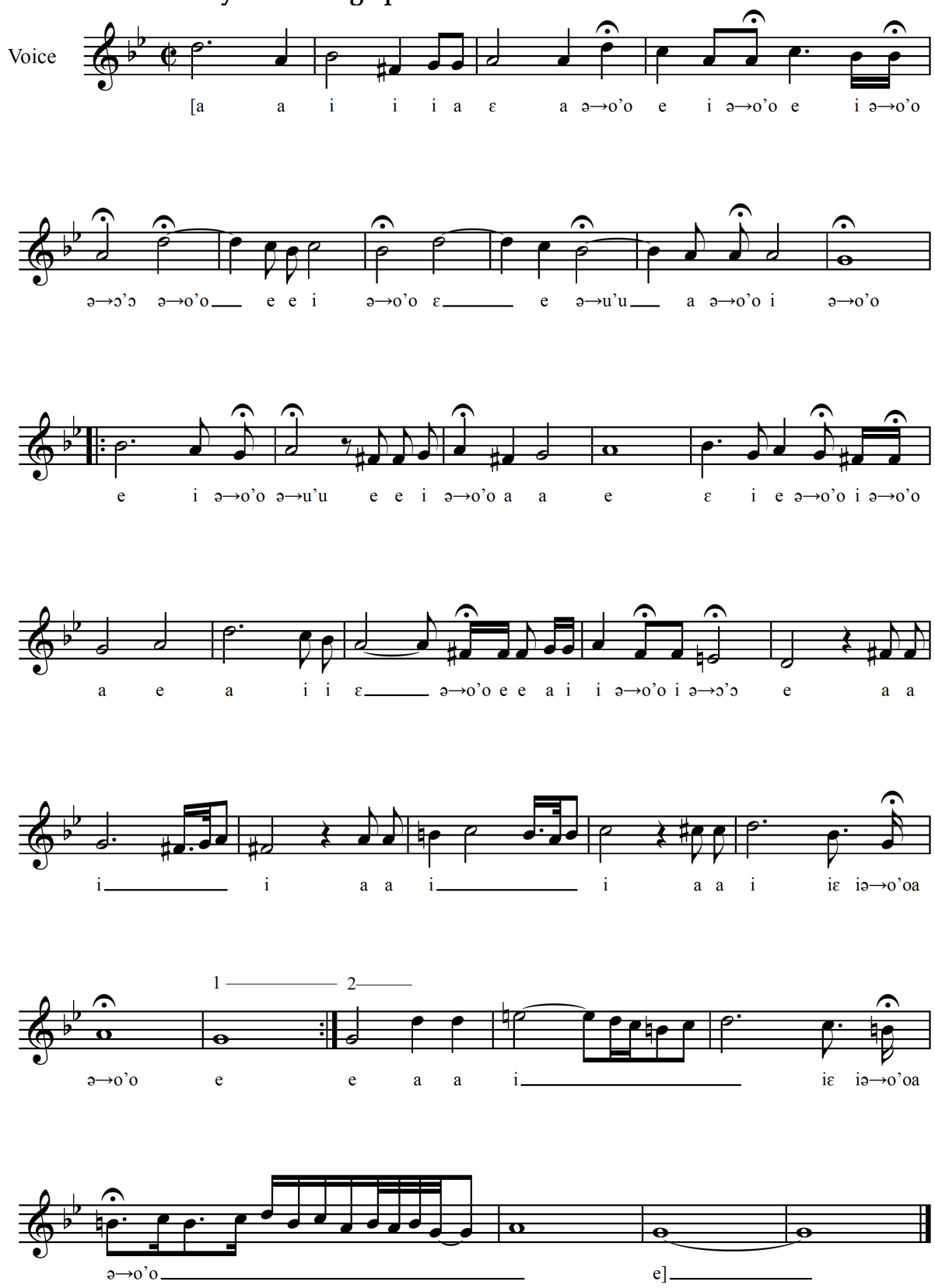


The next step is to slowly form the rounded vowels wherever they should be. Thus, repeat the exercise as above, but on every vowel that you have altered from its original form place a fermata and slowly round the lips to the necessary position. This forming process will normally take a few seconds, so after you have the correct rounded vowel, take a breath (maintaining the vowel position of the mouth), repeat that pitch, and continue with the phrase.

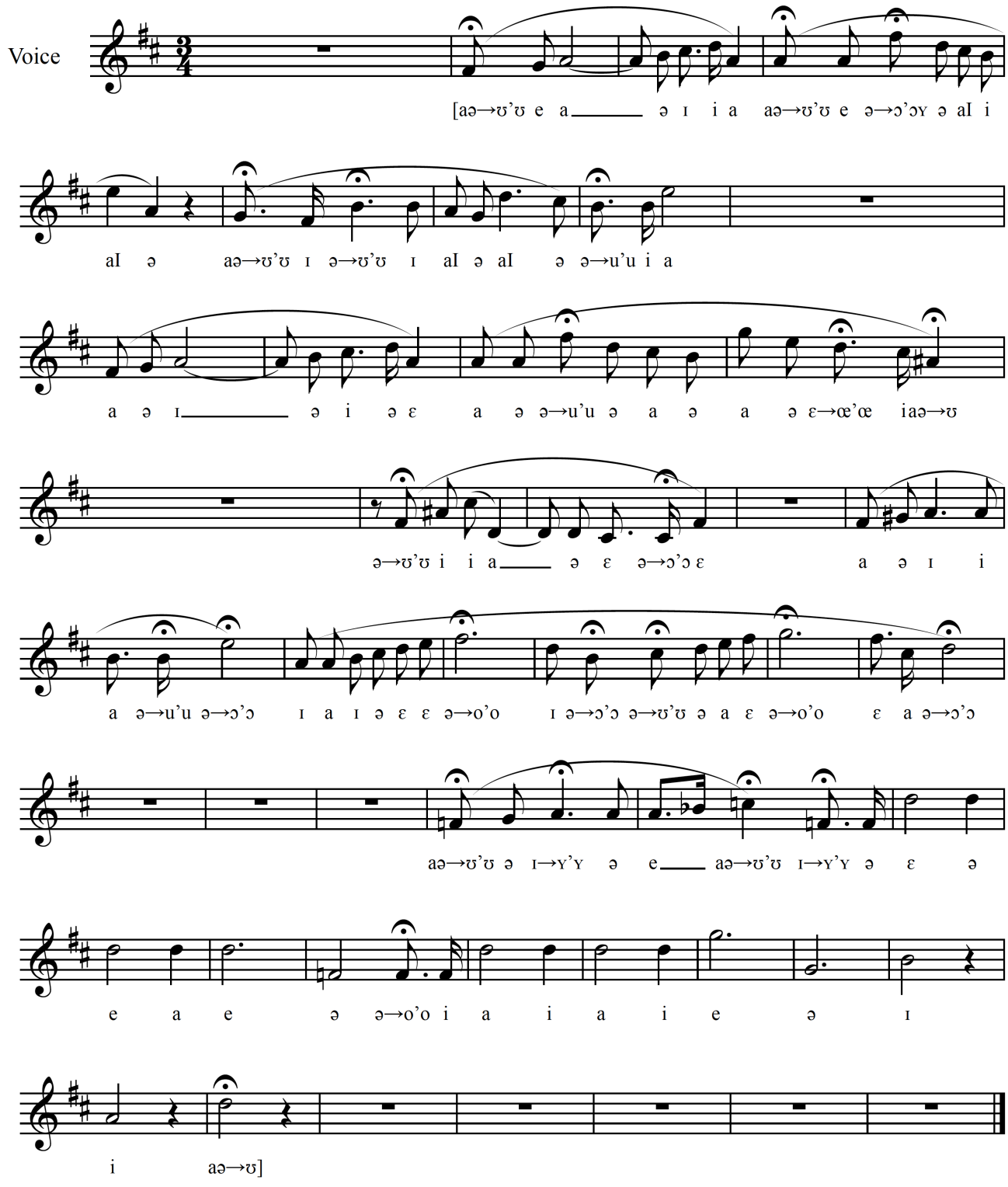
* ornamental appoggiaturas have been written out

Example 47 Amarilli, mia bella **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**

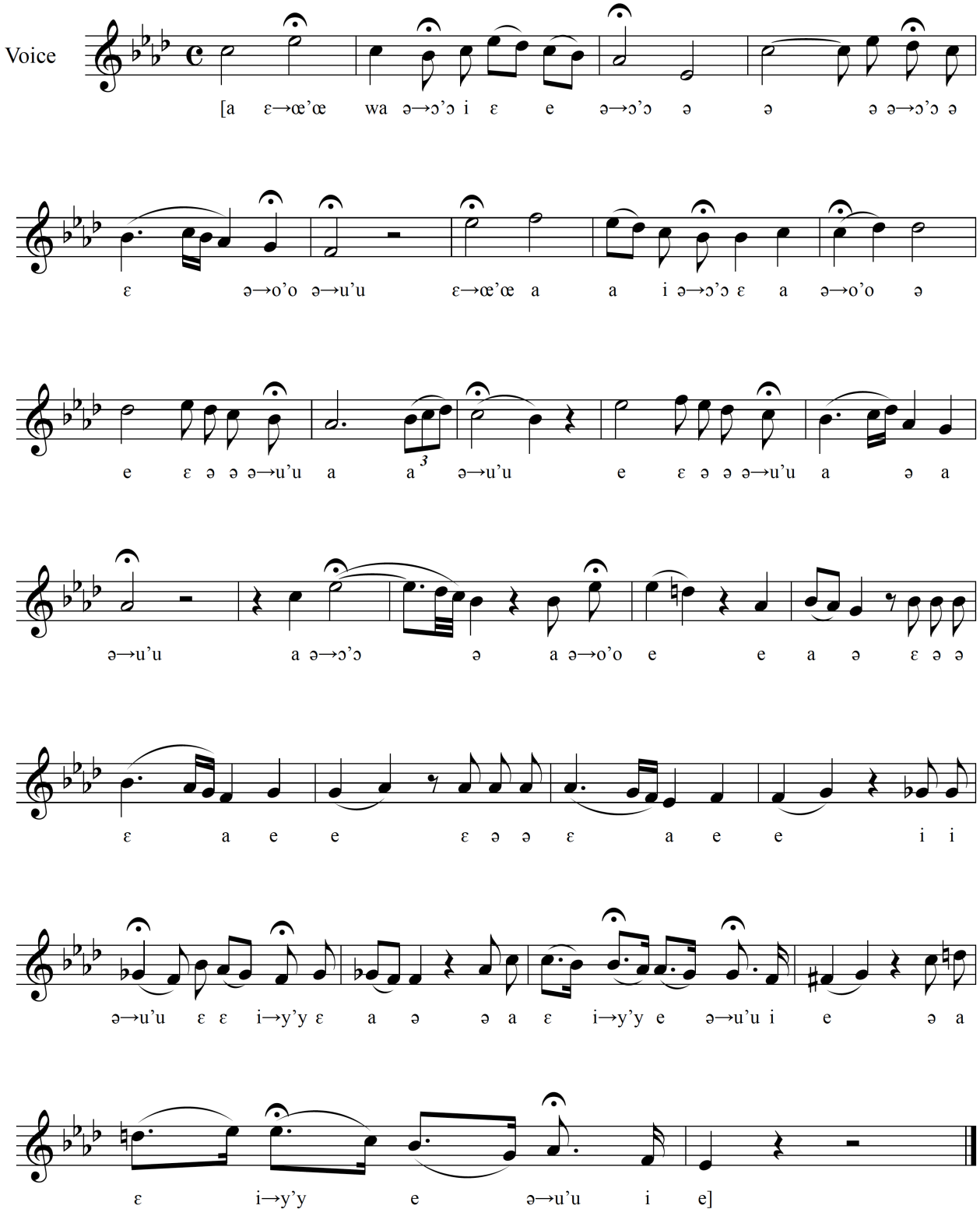
Vowels only – rounding lips



Example 48 Die Nacht **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Vowels only – rounding lips



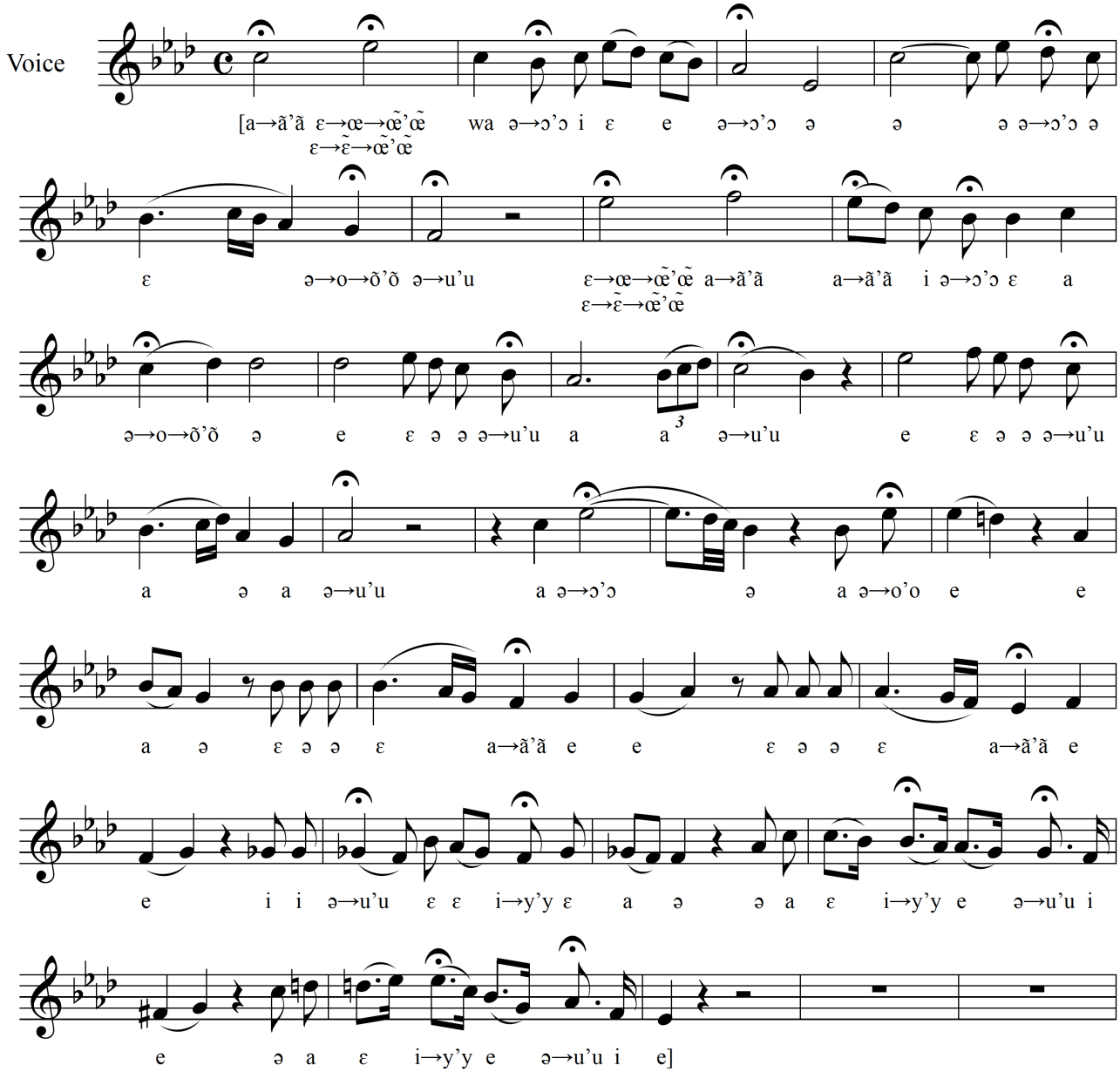
Example 49 Dans un bois solitaire, mm. 1-29* **W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)**
Vowels only – rounding lips (without nasality)



* ornamental appoggiaturas have been written out

The next stage is only necessary where nasal vowels exist. Repeat the preceding exercise to create the rounded vowels but then add nasality as the final step. Again, after arriving at the correct vowel, take a breath (in the same vowel shape), repeat the final vowel, and continue with the phrase. One may choose to combine the previous two steps into one, in which case you should change slowly from the altered vowel to the rounded vowel (when necessary) and then add nasality, or first add nasality to the non-rounded vowel and then round the lips.

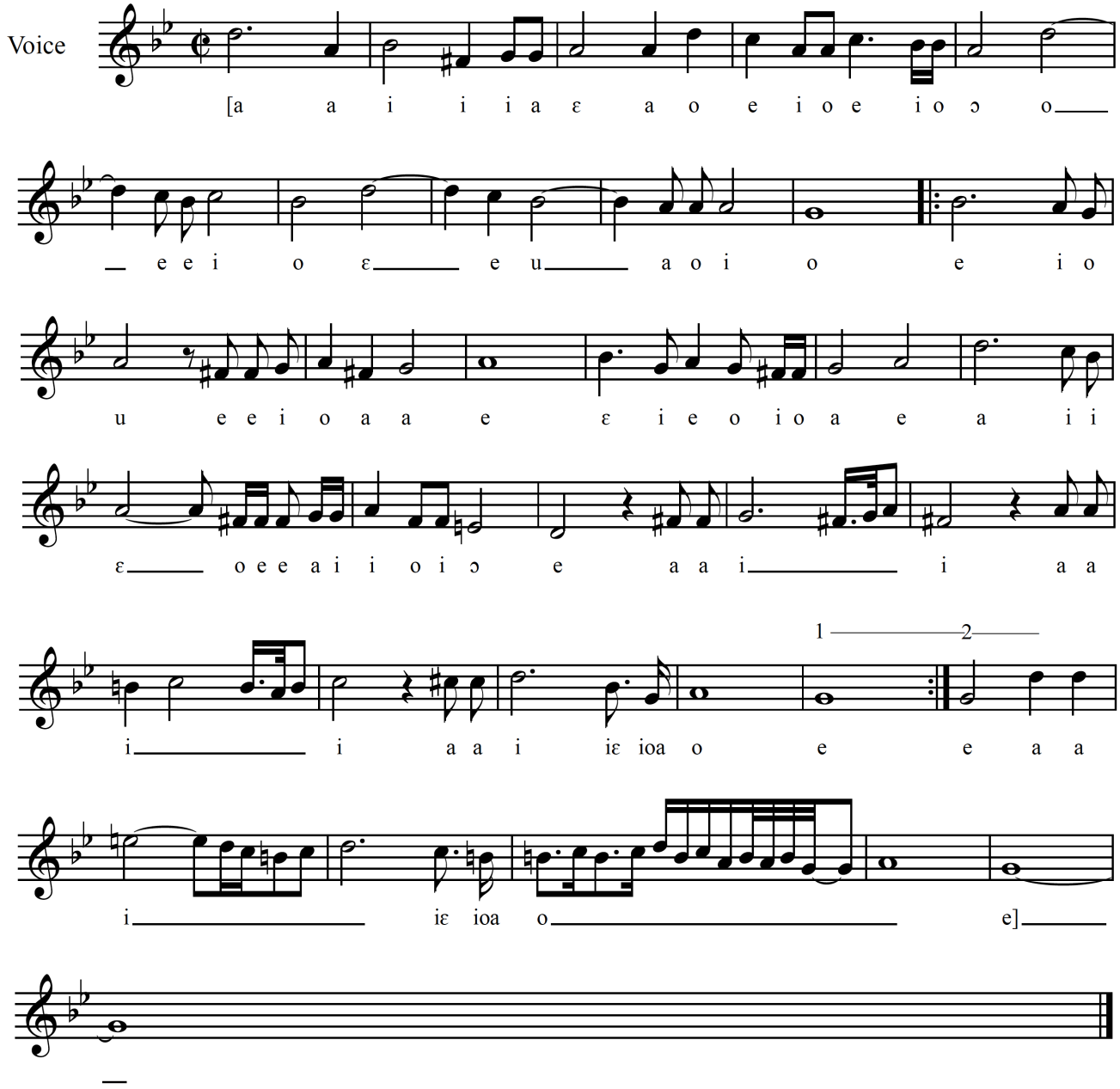
Example 50 Dans un bois solitaire, mm. 1-29* **W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)**
Vowels only – rounding lips and adding nasality



* ornamental appoggiaturas have been written out

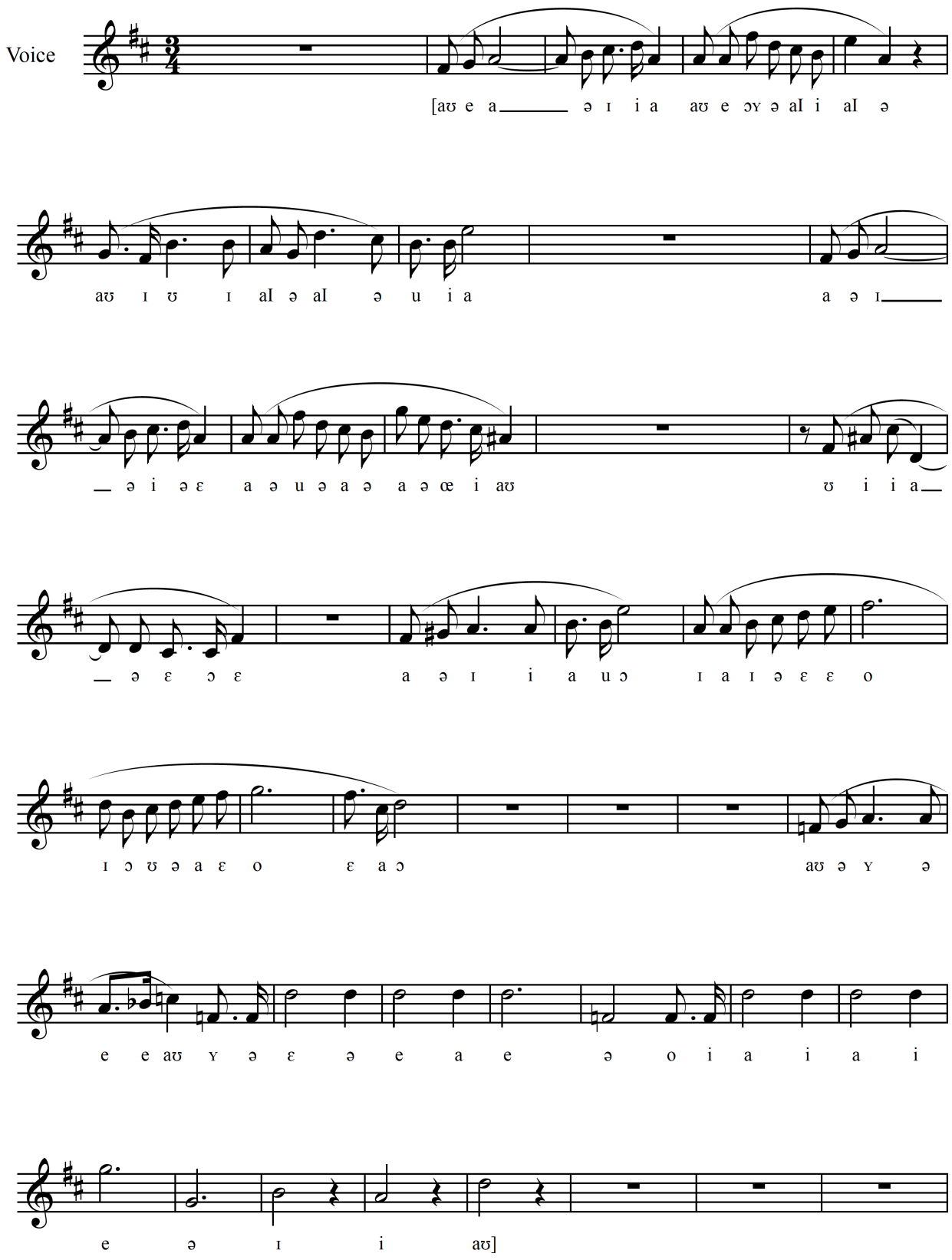
Having become better aware of the clarity and formation of all the vowels in a phrase, one should then sing through the phrase in tempo on all of the ultimate vowels. If the singer is able to accurately produce the rounded and nasal vowels immediately and precisely, then it should not pose difficulties to maintain good resonance throughout the whole phrase and a supple shift between vowel sounds.

Example 51 Amarilli, mia bella **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Vowels only – with rounded lips

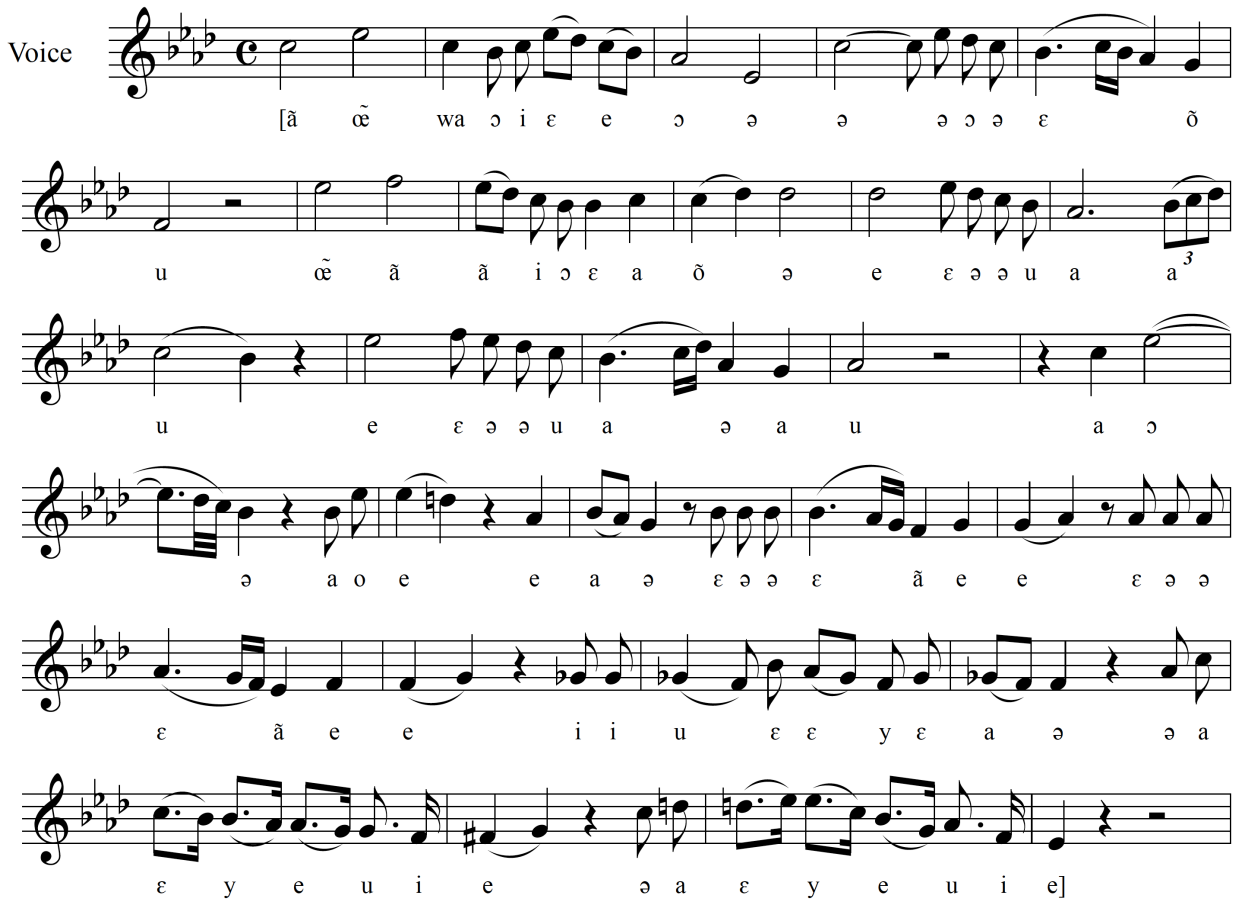


Example 52 Die Nacht **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**

Vowels only – with rounded lips



Example 53 Dans un bois solitaire, mm. 1-29* **W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)**
Vowels only – with rounded lips and nasal vowels



Finally, sing through the piece adding in the consonants, but attempt to keep the consonants crisp and quick so you are able to maintain the legato feeling.

Throughout the execution of these exercises it is important to focus on several aspects of your vocal production. The jaw should remain relaxed, and only close slightly when a rounded vowel demands it (pay particular attention that the jaw remain loose on [i], [I], [e], and [ɛ]). As the vowels are formed chiefly with the tongue, clearly the tongue will move; however, be certain that there is no excess tension. The tongue should never exhibit a pronounced concave shape, and should remain still when changes of pitch (but not vowel) occur. Try to also maintain the relaxed position of the jaw and stillness of the tongue when breathing at the beginning of the phrase or between phrases, and get into the habit of breathing in the position of the first vowel (even when you will ultimately precede the vowel with a consonant). One can also notice where and how diphthongs and glottal stops will occur.

* ornamental appoggiaturas have been written out

Consonants

While precision with vowels is paramount to the transmission of text in singing, such precision is futile if it is not articulated by equally precise consonants. While poor production of consonants may simply make a text unintelligible, it may also spoil an otherwise musical and expressive melodic line by obscuring pitch (the greatest problem being the placement and production of voiced consonants discussed above).

Many singers lack conviction in their articulation because they feel that the consonants disrupt the legato line exemplified in the vowels-only exercise above. It is true that certain consonants by their very nature interrupt a continuous flow of air and/or pitch, but a legato line in singing is as much a conceptual reality as a technical one. Many would be far more disturbed (or even offended) by the text not being clear than they would by the requisite mechanics of producing consonants which are inherent to the music anyway. Moreover, correct and precise production of consonants has numerous benefits in attaining and maintaining a balanced resonance because of the sensations they produce and the fact that they keep the muscles of the mouth supple and free of excess tension.

When we dealt with the specific production of individual consonants in 'Vocal analysis', we likely elongated and/or laboured over many of them to ensure that we could identify their rhythmic placement in the construction of the piece. However, in the actual singing of a phrase, the length of the consonants should only be as long as their production requires, which is extremely brief in most circumstances. Such production of consonants demands an incredibly agile functioning of the tongue and jaw so that consonants merely punctuate a legato line of vowels.

Finding the balance between consonant suppleness and clarity often takes a great deal of time to attain. The concept, however, is simple: do the minimum amount of effort in the shortest length of time. Just as one should only form the vowels with what is required (i.e. with the tongue unless the lips also need to be rounded), consonant clarity and precision can only be attained in singing when excesses of effort (i.e. unnecessary movements of the jaw) are eliminated.

C1. The Ventriloquist

consonants; resonance; vowels
diction

One must first gain an awareness of the reality of consonant-production, and that can be achieved through the ventriloquist exercise. Isolate a phrase of a piece, and speak the text with the mouth in the same position as when one is at rest with only enough opening to allow sound to escape. It is essential that the jaw, although closed, not become rigid. Notice how minute the physical actions required by consonants are (rounded vowels may pose some difficulties in this exercise – you may choose to utilize the non-rounded equivalent instead).

Repeat the exercise, but now speak the text slowly. With this elongation of vowels you will still notice the minimal physical actions required to produce the consonants, but also how short a time their production takes in relation to the length of the vowels. This is a simple way of learning the principle of consonants as punctuations of the legato vocalic line. Even when you execute a continuant, which in theory can be sustained like a vowel, notice the speed and precision with which the consonant begins and ends.

Next, with the same closed-mouth position, sing the line. You may feel unable to sing certain parts with the mouth closed; however, if you ensure that your jaw remains relaxed, you will discover that (in addition to the minute movements of the tongue and jaw for the consonants) the roof of the mouth will alter its position depending on the pitch level. Such movements are a resonance phenomenon, and invaluable in the ultimate execution of the phrase. What is important to note is that, when the jaw and tongue are relaxed and the breath-support is sound, the mouth will find the appropriate resonance space on its own. The point here is to permit the changes in the mouth to occur, rather than to actively make them happen.

C2. Jaw position and consonant-production

posture; consonants; resonance; vowels; legato
diction

This exercise is a natural continuation of the ventriloquist. One should now try to recreate the above-mentioned sensations but with the mouth in a position that will ultimately be used for singing. This position is highly subjective, and may also be variable depending on the singer. The best indicators for an appropriate size of mouth opening are firstly that the jaw remains relaxed, and secondly that it allows the easy execution of consonants without more movement than is technically required.

The next step is to repeat the ventriloquist exercise from the beginning with the mouth open. When speaking the text more slowly, the quick and precise formation of consonants may become more difficult. This is because the distance the tongue and jaw have to move is greater; however, it is imperative that they be produced at the same speed. More importantly, they must be produced in the same manner, utilizing only what is required. Thus, if a consonant only requires the movement of the tongue then the jaw should remain released and still.

Another point worthy of attention is the fact that many consonants (particularly those formed with the tongue alone) can be formed within various vowel positions. To assist with a legato line, one should avoid changing vowel shape to produce a consonant. Similarly, consonants that begin a phrase should also be formed within the subsequent vowel wherever possible, and this is much easier when inhalation occurs on that vowel already.

Before singing in tempo, sing the phrase at a slower speed to heighten the sensation of swiftness in the consonant production. Also, when singing (both slowly and in tempo), search for the ideal mouth position that allows precise production of consonants, but also permits natural shifts in the resonance space. If the mouth is too closed, the sound may not project properly and accurate formation of vowels may become obscured; if the mouth is too open, the production of consonants may be compromised and the natural resonance in the roof of the mouth may be hindered.

C3. Consonant-pairing

consonants; resonance
diction

As was mentioned in the vocal analysis section (pp. 43-44), voiced consonants are generally more difficult for singers to produce, particularly the voiced fricatives. Just as we used vowel-pairings to assist with the correct formation of rounded vowels, so too may we use consonant-pairings to assist with improving voiced consonants. These pairings work even better with consonants, as the mouth formation of the consonants in each pair is identical.

Example 54 Chart of International Phonetic Alphabet consonant symbols produced by the International Phonetic Association

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

From a specific phrase, isolate specific words or combinations of words which employ voiced consonants. First speak the word(s) replacing voiced consonants with their unvoiced equivalents, then add voice to the consonants where required. If necessary isolate the specific consonant and alternate between the unvoiced and voiced sounds, ensuring that the only difference between the two is the engagement of the vocal folds.

Example 55 Amarilli, mia bella
Select words with unvoiced and voiced consonants

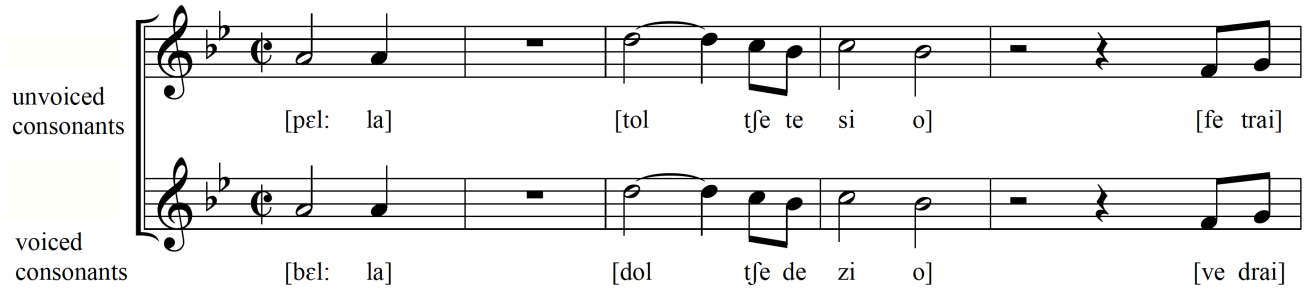
Word	Unvoiced in IPA	Voiced in IPA
bella	pɛl:la	bɛl:la
dolce	toltʃe	doltʃe
desio	tesio	dezio
vedrai	fetrai	vedrai

Example 56 Die Nacht
Select words with unvoiced and voiced consonants

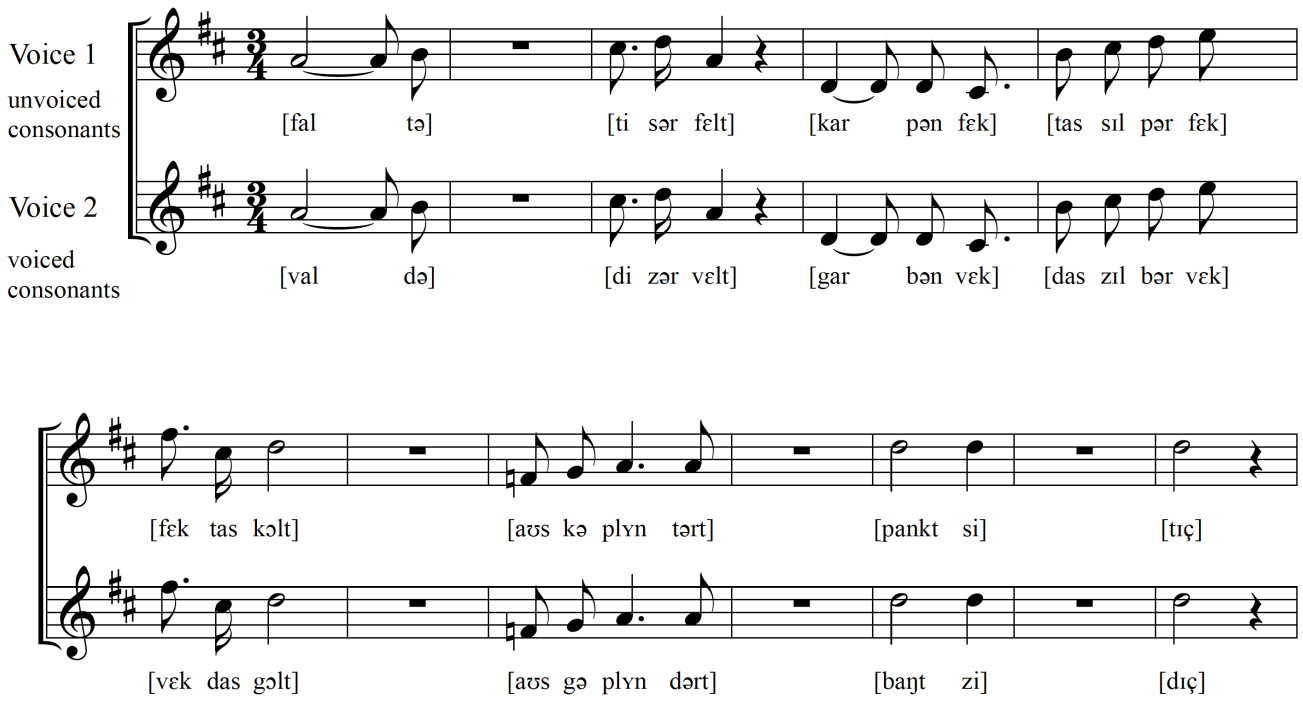
Word	Unvoiced in IPA	Voiced in IPA
Walde	faltə	valde
dieser Welt	tisər fɛlt	dizər vɛlt
Garben weg	karpən fɛk	garbən vɛk
das Silber weg	tas sılpər fɛk	das zılbər vɛk
weg das Gold	fɛk tas kɔlt	vɛk das gɔlt
Ausgeplündert	aʊskəplʏntərt	aʊsgəplʏndərt
bangt, sie	pankt, si	baŋt, zi
dich	tıç	dıç

Next sing the specific word(s) out of time on the required pitches, again replacing the voiced consonants with their unvoiced counterparts. Go through the same process of adding voice where necessary as in the speaking example above. At this stage, when isolation of specific consonants is necessary, be certain that the pitch you use is that required by the music.

Example 57 Amarilli, mia bella **Giulio Caccini (ca. 1545-1618)**
Select words out of time on written pitches – unvoiced to voiced consonants



Example 58 Die Nacht **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**
Select words on written pitches – with unvoiced and voiced consonants



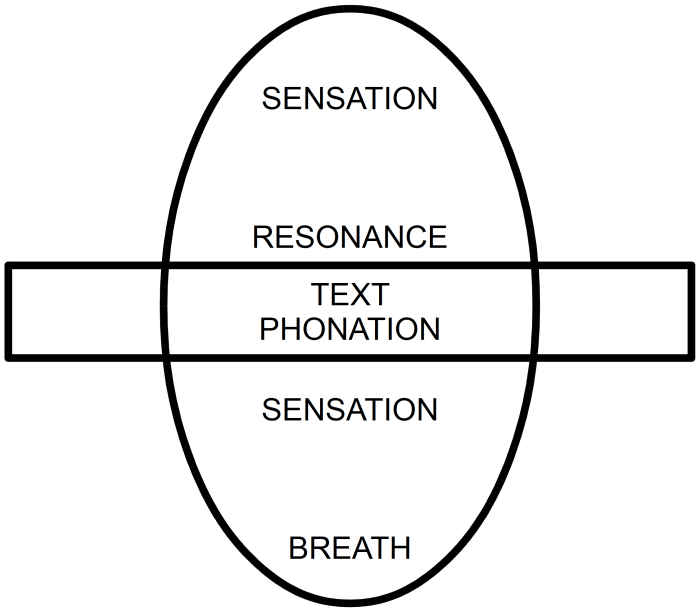
Resonance

Resonance in classical singing is often a difficult issue. Though teachers and singers alike are aware of its importance, its instruction is often complicated because it relies so heavily on subjective sympathetic vibrations. At opposite extremes are nasal and throat resonance. The latter is generally created with a depressed larynx, which subsequently darkens the tone quality. Such resonance, though favoured in certain schools of singing, is more characteristic of the beginning or amateur singer and ought to be avoided unless employed for some specific expressive purpose. Nasal resonance is defined by all or part of the sound emanating from the nose. The sensation of nasal resonance is relatively easy to teach with the use of nasal consonants and nasal vowels. Though nasal resonance is generally looked down upon as a basis for classical singing, clearly its occasional use is a necessity, and it is often helpful in teaching a forward placement in the early stages of instruction.

In addition to throat and nasal resonance we have head resonance, which comprises everything in between. Depending on the singer, his or her instruction, and his or her physiology, the characteristics of head resonance are widely varied and widely accepted. Indeed, as long as the type of resonance employed is not deleterious to the voice, there is theoretically no reason why it should not become part of a singer's expressive palette. In fact, the ability of a singer to subtly change his or her resonance space and in turn vary the colours of the voice is truly the mark of a great artist.

One of the few useful images I have come across in the teaching of singing technique has to do with the relationship between breath, text, and resonance. It describes singing on two planes: horizontal and vertical.

Example 59 **Two planes of singing**



On the horizontal plane is phonation in the larynx (not physically felt) and pronunciation of the text in the mouth. As described in detail above, the pronunciation of text should occur with a suppleness of the jaw and tongue, and essentially should remain clear and constant regardless of the tessitura. On the vertical plane are the physical reality of breath management (in the lower torso), the acoustic reality of resonance (in the vocal tract), and the physical sensations these processes create. As I discussed in the ventriloquist exercise, when the jaw and tongue are relaxed and the breath-support is sound, the mouth will find the appropriate resonance space on its own, which will in turn provide numerous sympathetic vibrations in the head and chest. Thus, a natural resonance in singing is best left to its own devices. In other words, ensure that all of the fundamentals of good singing (posture and breath-support) are in place, pronounce the text correctly and precisely, and the vocal tract will produce the best resonance space to carry the sound out of the body.

R1. Monotone text-recitation

resonance; breath
diction

Throughout the course of learning a piece, it is quite natural to speak the text from time to time. Not only does such an act give us a greater appreciation for the literary roots of a text, but it also heightens our awareness of textual nuances that we may be able to incorporate into our interpretation of a song. When we speak a text, just as we speak in day-to-day life, the pitch at which we speak is continually alternating. To assist us in discovering the 'horizontal' nature of text-pronunciation for singing, we should reduce text-recitation to a technical act on one spoken pitch. The actual result will be a sort of chanting on a low pitch. The pitch itself is irrelevant, as your concern is wholly with the even (almost robotic) pronunciation of words.

Immediately after speaking the text monotonously, sing the phrase recreating the evenness of text-pronunciation. Try to remain passive and allow the inside of the mouth to do what comes naturally depending on the pitch. If you notice significant changes in the elevation of the larynx itself, be certain that you are maintaining proper posture, and that your breath-support is active and sound.

R2. Speaking into a phrase

resonance; breath

It is often the case in singing that we are reliant on the beginning of a phrase if we hope to maintain a solid technique to its conclusion. This is certainly the case for our breath-support, and as a consequence also for our resonance.

An extension of the monotone-text-recitation exercise is speaking into a phrase. For this exercise, instead of beginning the phrase on the written pitch, you immediately precede the sung note by speaking the word (normally this is a lower pitch). From this spoken position you slide to the sung note, but maintain the position of the mouth and larynx used when speaking. Continue with the rest of the phrase as normal and repeat the exercise after the subsequent breath.

R3. Sing with nose closed

resonance; consonants
diction

One of the archetypal tools in singing instruction to guard against nasality is to pinch the nose with the fingers. Because nasal resonance involves sound partly travelling through the nose, plugging the nose will alter the quality of sound immediately if nasality is present. If you are concerned that you are producing a sound with unwanted nasality, simply stop on a pitch, close and open the nose one or two times with your fingers and see if there is any change in sound or sensation.

Closing the nose also has other uses in establishing a well-balanced resonance in singing. Two faults which often get in the way of good resonance are over-articulating consonants and attempting to 'place' the sound too far forward (the text deviates from the horizontal plane). If we think of resonance as on a continuum between the back of the throat and the nose/front of the face, we may realize that our resonating tendencies may lean to one extreme or the other. This is not necessarily a bad thing, and indeed certain repertoires and circumstances may require it. However, if we do not remain balanced in our resonance we may find that certain passages become unnecessarily difficult, or aesthetically less than ideal.

Singing an entire phrase with the nose closed (pinched at the end) simultaneously prevents singing with a nasal tone, removes unnecessary pressure or effort in the enunciation of consonants, and assists with the placement of the voice in a balanced resonance in the middle of the head. The only problem with this exercise is that nasal consonants are impossible, and

thus there will be the occasional stopping of air flow (and more often than not a slightly runny nose if you do the exercise for any length of time). This dilemma, however, can easily be used to your advantage, as it often points out where one has the tendency to unnecessarily (and detrimentally) elongate nasal consonants.

R4. Make resonance choices

resonance

Most of the exercises above were designed to assist the singer in finding a balanced resonance in the singing voice. As already mentioned, the various colours possible in a voice are due in large part to the resonance spaces employed. Though it is important that the core of the voice and technique employ a well-balanced head resonance, it is also important that the singer allow him- or herself to create a variety of colours through resonance if musical expression will be improved by doing so. One should not make such resonance choices too technical (except in extreme cases where you are seeking a particularly comic or melodramatic effect). Rather, one should embrace underlying thoughts and emotions whilst singing. Doing this will naturally alter facial expressions and body postures, and, as a consequence, subtly change the quality of the sound without compromising the foundations of healthy vocal production.

Final touches

If one has executed all or the majority of the preceding exercises, he or she should have a clear understanding of how a piece is put together and how to perform it with musical accuracy and a sound technique. In the final stages of performance-preparation it is always a good idea to record oneself and make notes of small details that still require further attention. When one hears him- or herself, what needs to be fixed is often self-evident. Normally it will suffice to isolate the problem spot and repeat one of the earlier exercises designed to address the relevant problem.

In the final stages of preparation, however, it is also helpful and instructive to allow oneself to sing through full phrases or the full piece with a new idea or new technical aid. The following exercises are very simple conceptually, and generally designed to improve one's technical and musical execution of a piece as a whole. I shall divide the exercises into technical and musical categories, though I would recommend alternating between the two in practice so that one's final performance has a good balance between technical execution and musical expression. Though it is often through sound technique that one is able to reach his or her full expressive capabilities, it should be noted that this is not always the case. Ultimately, an audience has little interest in an inexpressive performance, so be certain that technique is never the be-all and end-all of your singing goals.

What I offer here are not performance skills (which have been thoroughly and thoughtfully dealt with in *Power Performance for Singers*, see Appendix 4), but the logical extension of the present system of deconstruction/reconstruction, which can be employed in the days or hours leading up to a performance.

Technical exercises

Technical exercises intended for the final stages of performance-preparation are generally to remind the singer to insist on the fundamentals of good singing.

T1. Breath bounce

breath; resonance

To insist on a solid but at the same time flexible breath-support, speak the text but extend every stressed syllable with 2-4 'bounces' of the breath-support mechanism. The bounce itself should physically originate in the area below the rib-cage, and result in small dynamic oscillations in the sustained pitch. One may also accompany the dynamic oscillations with small pitch-fluctuations whereby the sustained pitch falls and then slides back to the appropriate pitch at the height of the dynamic variation.

This exercise can then be extended to the singing of complete phrases, by pausing briefly on any sustained pitches and executing the same bouncing action. This exercise is designed to prevent any detrimental tightening of the breath-support mechanism throughout the course of a phrase, and will also promote a well-balanced resonance. Be certain that the bouncing action is limited to the torso, as any involvement of the larynx or jaw will negate the exercise's usefulness.

T2. Expanded breath

breath; resonance; legato

One very useful tool in the study of technique is to mimic the actions of singing with external visual cues, particularly when they involve movements of other parts of the body. During the course of singing, mirroring the expansion of the lower torso with movements of the hands can help as a visual reminder that the breath-support should remain engaged. Of course, the lower torso does contract as air leaves the body, and one should not attempt to insist on an actual expanded position when it only involves abdominal muscle tension (the front abdominal muscles can easily be manipulated to give the impression of good breath-support function, even when the muscles may have become completely disconnected from this process). Nonetheless, it is often helpful to maintain a feeling of expansion throughout the course of a phrase to enable a solid but flexible breath-support.

Before beginning a phrase, place the hands in front of the navel, maintaining a spherical shape in the empty space between them. As you inhale, allow the hands to separate as if the air you are breathing in is filling the space between your hands. As you begin to sing, ensure (particularly at the initial onset) that the hands do not contract inward. As you continue the phrase, maintain space between the hands, but never fix their position; even insist on a pulsating movement (but the impetus of the pulsation should always be outwards, even if the hands gradually move closer together as more air escapes the body).

T3. Buzz the music

breath; intonation; legato; resonance
pitch

Though I do not generally advocate the separation of text and pitches in the learning of a piece, it can be instructive in preparation for performance to spend some time focusing on accurate intonation and a steady flow of air without tiring the voice. Many singers have a certain sound they prefer as a means of doing this, humming and the lip trill being perhaps the best examples. The voiced bilabial fricative [ß], though not employed in any major singing language, is a consonant that can reinforce accurate intonation and steady airflow simultaneously. One can easily learn to form it by filling the cheeks with air and then pronouncing a quiet [b] while allowing a small stream of air to leave the mouth. Allow the cheeks to remain inflated so as not to create any excess tension in the mouth. The result is a buzzing sound, not dissimilar to a soft trumpet. The benefit of this process is to reinforce a steady flow of air with minimal strain on the voice. Also, as it is very soft, one can do it discreetly in the company of others.

T4. Get physical, then stay still

posture; breath
expression

The final technical advice I shall offer is really not an exercise at all, but rather a way of practising that permits the body to be free. If you have engaged in even a handful of some of the deconstruction and reconstruction exercises that I have presented in this book, you have probably internalized a great deal of the score you are working from. When you know a piece so well, your only job left is to make music, and this can be as simple as allowing all of your preparation to flow out of you. But all of that work can easily remain trapped if your body suddenly gets tight. Though thoughts of good breathing and good posture should be with you in all of your preparation, for some, just the thought of 'relaxing' makes them tense. In

such circumstances one may do well to engage in physical movements during the course of singing. By these I do not mean the typical hand indicating some type of resonance ideal, or mirroring the shape of a melodic line. Though such actions are commonplace in the practice room, they are normally unconscious and ironically interfere with vocalism, as they create hidden body tension. Physical movements can only help release the body and in turn release the voice when they are conscious. After that the possibilities are endless.

One can also follow the reverse method and focus on keeping the body absolutely still except for those muscles actually involved in creating sound. Even if you are diligent about rehearsing in front of a mirror, the tendency for the body to express music as well as the voice is often inevitable. It is not my intention or desire that singers should perform completely motionless, but to be able to do so can also be a highly expressive device, and often such moments allow the voice the greatest freedom.

Musical exercises

The intense study of a score's musical and technical demands, which this book's exercises aim to facilitate, will gradually reveal the inherent expressive elements of a piece as well as the means to execute such expression. Good singing naturally demands solid technical execution, but a singer should feel confident enough in his or her technique that an ultimate performance is perceived primarily as an act of musical and emotional expression. In other words, regardless of how much time and energy has gone into acquiring a solid technical execution of a piece, this work is irrelevant if it does not serve to facilitate an expressive performance.

What one aspires to express through singing is both highly subjective and highly variable. Many songs and recitatives have a clear narrative text, in which case the singer takes on the role of story-teller. In this scenario the clarity of textual meaning, syntax, and enunciation drives the performance's purpose. Other songs and arias often reflect upon or relate to a certain experience or feeling, and thus the actual meaning of the words is secondary to the emotion which underlies them. In reality most vocal music, like normal speech in everyday life, is at the same time semantic and sensuous.

While knowing a particular word's meaning (especially in a foreign language) is necessary as a basic element of textual comprehension, this in itself is often insufficient for true expression in singing. When we communicate in day-to-day life, we rarely do so with a conscious awareness of an individual word's meaning. This is true for the acts both of transmission and of reception. Words are only the medium through which specific thoughts and feelings are transmitted (this is why one can easily 'say' one thing but clearly 'mean' something else). It is the difference between words written on a page and words spoken from someone's mouth and heart. While most classical singing originates in a written text (the score), in performance there is the possibility for that inherent expression to be augmented by the singer's underlying emotional thoughts and feelings. Thus, we as singers must consider the balance between narration and emotion, depending on how a piece is written, but also on how we feel about that piece ourselves.

A musical score can at first appear restricting from an expressive point of view, as the majority of expressive tools we use in speech (speed, rhythm, pitch, etc.) are pre-determined. However, if a singer surrenders him- or herself to the restrictions that the score imposes, all additional expressive elements that the singer brings to a performance are transmitted organically and sincerely. This is the nature of honest performance, and to the true musician it is incredibly liberating both physically and personally.

M1. Word-isolation

interpretation
expression

Within any musical line there are bound to be certain words which have a heightened importance, whether by virtue of the meaning of the word itself, its placement in the textual phrase, or the manner in which the composer has set it. In considering individual words within a phrase one should consider both their semantic meaning and the expressivity of their phonetics. This is particularly important when we sing in foreign languages, but also relevant in our mother tongue.

In this exercise, isolate individual words and sing each whilst thinking of its semantic equivalent (if in a foreign language think the mother-tongue equivalent). Next isolate the same words and take the time to appreciate the combination of consonants and vowels that create them. Finally, do a personal analysis of how or whether the meaning is transmitted through the word's phonetic elements, and whether the most expressive element is the word's meaning, its pronunciation, or an underlying (other) thought or emotion.

M2. Subtext

interpretation
expression

In many situations the semantic meaning of a text will seem insufficient to explain why it has been set to music, particularly in compositions with a dramatic purpose or intention. In such circumstances it is necessary for the performer to give some thought to an appropriate subtext. This subtext can be driven by an ongoing narrative as in an opera (particularly if an aria is sung out of the context of the full work), but the subtext may also be a certain emotional or mental state which is being expressed through a collection of words, pitches and rhythms. In this exercise, consider possible emotions or intentions appropriate to individual phrases or words and sing them with those feelings or intentions at the forefront of your mind. If you can plausibly apply more than one emotion or intention in certain circumstances, repeat for each one. You can easily draw upon such thoughts in performance itself.

M3. Narrative vs. experience

interpretation
expression

As stated above, many pieces have at least some necessity of narration, that is, on some level a purely semantic expression is important. Happily, to some extent such semantic transmission is bound to result from clear diction and attention to musical details. Nonetheless, it is important that we as singers be neither overly narrative nor overly abstract in our expression. In this exercise, alternate singing a phrase as an act of narration (communicating the meaning of the words) and as an act of experience (embodiment of emotions and intentions in sound). Gradually try to merge these two different mindsets as you find the appropriate balance required of a specific phrase or piece.

Memorization

While memorization is not always a necessity in classical singing, there is no doubt that a piece is not fully internalized until one can sing it without a score. That being said, that a singer can sing a piece without a score does not necessarily mean that he or she has internalized it. The goal of memorization for a singer is not to visualize the score and then to sing from it indirectly. Rather, it is to execute the score through the fully internalized memory of the body and the mind. Except in a very few *a capella* solo pieces, memorization is not only a question of remembering one's personal line but also of knowing and feeling the many relationships of that line to the other voices or instruments involved in the piece. In short, memorization is the score made manifest.

If you have done several of the exercises in this book, and done so looking less at the score and more at yourself in the mirror, then you will likely have most of a piece, if not all of it, committed to memory already. Certainly the physicality or technical execution of a piece should be well internalized, and this need not be repeated endlessly in the final memorization exercises. Thus, during the final acts of memorization one should focus on using the brain rather than the voice.

Play/think

In the first exercise play your vocal line on a keyboard instrument (or other, if you can) whilst thinking the corresponding text. This exercise is similar to the melodic analysis done in the early stages of learning a piece; however, as the pitches and words have already been internalized in the body, this exercise serves to shift our source of reference for this execution from the score to the mind. If possible, one should also play intermittent melodies and accompanying harmonies so that these moments are also transmitted from the score to the singer's mental awareness.

Mouth the words

Another useful tool in the memorization process is to mouth the words in time without voice whilst thinking the pitches. This is essentially the reverse of the preceding exercise and demands already a clear internalization of the score. The mouthing of the words is added training for the technical execution of a piece, but doing this in silence allows multiple repetitions without tiring the voice. Again, what you hear in your head should not be limited to an individual vocal line, but should embrace the other voices and instruments and the melodies and harmonies that they create. Such training can also come in handy as preparation for rehearsals so that you can identify the source of problems in putting a piece together with other singers and/or instrumentalists.

Conclusions

Given proper and thorough preparation, performance only requires that you allow all your hard work to come together in a specific moment. Be in that moment, take in everything around you with all of your senses, and allow your preparation to make all of the appropriate responses while the music comes out of you.

An essay on analysis

Performer's analysis in a New Age musicology

Thesis

The musical work classical performers strive to perform is a 'hypothetical ideal' of what the composer intended. The score is the primary device in the transmission of the composer's imagination to its realization in sound, and performers are the agents through whom this transmission takes place. The very nature of music as a performing art implies that this 'hypothetical ideal' includes the subjectivity of performers, which is why various performances of the same work can theoretically be equally 'ideal' even if exceptionally different. Because performers and academics fundamentally 'read' music in different ways, there is an immense disconnect between the analytical models they employ in their respective work, and ultimately starkly contrasting ideas of what 'music' is and what it means. If the discipline of performance studies truly wishes to study professional performers and performances, it must meet them on their terms. Furthermore, scholars working within performance studies should reassess their ideas and methodologies to embrace the relevant components and interconnections presented in the matrices below.

Summary

In musical terms analysis is normally used in reference to the intellectual study of a work's internal coherence. Generally considered a subdiscipline of musicology, analysis is often regarded by performers as a tedious component of early training alongside the other theoretical courses they are required to follow. Analysis at the earliest stages applies an identification system for the basic elements of music (intervals, scales, chords, metre, etc.). Later this extends to the identification of harmonic progressions and the recognition of common structural forms (binary, ternary, sonata, rondo, etc.). For those musicians who go on to have performing careers, there is rarely the need for or interest in further study of music analysis beyond this basic level, and indeed many are pleased to leave it behind them. For those who go on to study musicology, analysis often becomes the centrepiece of their intellectual work, whether they embrace a pre-established model such as Schenker or some other analytical ideology.

It may be true that performers leave analysis behind them as an intellectual or scholarly pursuit (at least in the specialized musicological sense of the word); nevertheless, the extensive training that professional performers subsequently receive involves the acquisition of a highly complex set of analytical tools and skills. While musicologists' analytical activities are generally concerned with the intellectual comprehension of a work's musical coherence (whether that be in terms of the work itself or within a specific cultural context), performers' analytical activities involve translating a musical score into an aural and physical reality. These analytical tools and skills, however, are rarely codified in terms that the musical scholar can understand or identify. Thus, analysis of this sort is rarely considered relevant (or considered at all) from a scholarly point of view, even though it could result in research of

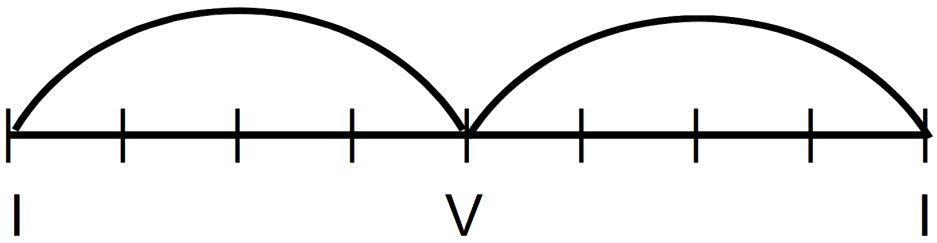
great academic interest and at the same time be relevant and beneficial to the performing musician.

Throughout this chapter I shall occasionally state 'positions' that I feel are relevant to this chapter and future work that may stem from it. I feel that these statements are stronger than mere assumptions, because my professional experience tells me that these things are similarly understood by a large proportion of professional performers.

Setting the stage

I believe it was during my graduate studies in the United States that I first encountered a conflict between analysis and performance. During my undergraduate degree in musicology I happily spent most of my time in the bowels of the music library,[1] and often engaged in various sorts of music analysis as the professor or my specific essay required. My performance activities, especially towards the end of my degree, took place almost wholly outside of the university context, and included singing with several professional ensembles and conducting my own choir. Though I was pretty good at the academic thing, I was also pretty good at the conducting thing, and not too bad at the singing thing, so I decided to pursue a Masters degree in voice and choral conducting.

In one of my required classes in the conducting course it soon became clear that the faculty had very strong ideas about how one should prepare for rehearsals. One of the requisite tasks was the creation of a 'bubble chart', which was a straightforward graphic representation of a work's basic phrase structure and tonal plan. This would look somewhat as follows, where the curved lines represent the phrase lengths, the straight line with strikes represents the number of bars, and the symbols at the bottom mark tonal structure:



I'm afraid this example may not be exactly how it worked, as I refused to do it. It's not that I was necessarily against the idea of counting phrase lengths, or considering an overarching tonal scheme for a piece of music. It's also not that I didn't have the time or was inherently lazy.[2] I just never received a satisfying explanation as to why I couldn't just do these tasks in

1 The library conveniently included a classroom in the basement with no windows, where most of the required courses took place.

2 Still, I was doing a double major, and when dealing with contrapuntal music these charts became rather time-consuming affairs.

my own way, which would have involved marking the score itself. If my memory serves, we were studying J. S. Bach's *B minor Mass*, and I could never see how a collection of lines and half circles on a piece of paper would better serve my appreciation of Bach's score.

And there it is, that word which is the centrepiece of this entire book: score. When I look back now (and with the experience of my post-graduate studies in musicology), perhaps the bubble-chart conflict was really a conflict in work-concept. The choral-conducting professors at the time were adamant that such tasks were relevant to the understanding of a work of music. If you didn't do this work, how could you get to grips with the structure? And if you didn't understand the structure, how could you possibly perform the work well? How could you be a good performer?

Who are performers? What do they do?

For the purposes of this chapter and book, the answer to the first question is very simple.

Position 1:

> **A performer is any person who actively participates in the creation of organized sound in a performance.**

Clearly this is a very broad definition, and encompasses perhaps millions of people throughout the world. So perhaps we need to define our category more to focus on professional performers.

Position 2:

> **A professional performer is any person who actively participates in the creation of organized sound in a performance, and receives financial remuneration for doing so.**

Perhaps we have reduced the number of people somewhat, but still this is too large and broad a population on which to focus any detailed study. So I make a big jump to a much smaller group, the full-time professional performer in the western art-music tradition.

Position 3:

Full-time professional performers in the western art-music tradition are those persons who devote more than 50% of their time to, and earn more than 50% of their annual income for their active role in the creation of organized sound in a performance.

Perhaps I've jumped from too broad to too narrow a definition, as my definition excludes many professional musicians who maintain active and successful performing careers. I purposely don't imply a level of performance quality in the group included in this position;[3] however, I do make the distinction of 'full-time', which I think is a relevant one in the discourse on music performance in the western art-music tradition. Many full-time professional performers make a conscious choice not to have the financial security of a fixed-income position (as a teacher, academic, or something else entirely), and I think this choice is clearly indicative of their self-concept, their dedication to music as a performing art, and/or their skill and facility as performers.[4] Of course there are many part-time (or retired) professional performers who made a conscious choice for personal and/or professional reasons (rather than exclusively financial ones) not to perform full-time. Again, I don't imply any level of quality in this group's performing capacities (or, if they move toward scholarship, in the validity of what they say about music performance); I simply make the distinction between two professional types of performers, and suggest that this distinction is relevant should anyone desire to consider music performers and performance from a sociological or psychological perspective.

Having answered the first question, and having focused this group into a specific subcategory, I can now dig deeper into the path this group has taken, and into what this group continues to do. To help with this I will look specifically at a few areas in detail that are common experiences or activities of the full-time professional music performer.[5]

Music education and training

The majority of professional musicians had an early exposure to and training in western art music. This early education generally included music classes as part of the general curriculum at school.[6] However, an eventual professional performer likely had extra-curricular music

3 From personal experience I know many part-time professionals, and even amateurs, whom I deem to have more skill and talent than some full-time performers. That being said, if you can make a living from performing, obviously someone thinks you are pretty good at it.

4 Often performers 'find themselves' in the midst of a full-time professional career, so this is not always a conscious choice; in these circumstances, however, their talent is usually quite remarkable.

5 Of course, many of these points are also a large part of the experience and work of part-time professional musicians.

6 What is/was taught in the school classrooms about music (if anything) varies widely, and one would need to look at each school/class individually to see the importance or even relevance of music in any general education. I proposed a new and possibly more relevant direction in classroom music education to embrace recent concepts in the sociology of music. See: K. Skelton, 'Should we study music *and*, or *as* culture?', *Music*

lessons and experiences that first introduced and cultivated the skills necessary for more focused study, particularly in a conservatory or university programme, where most professional performers spent at least some time.[7]

It is in the post-secondary programme of study that we first see a common approach to music education. Though certain institutions allow focused study early on, almost all students are required to take the same basic courses in history and theory, which lay a foundation for understanding 'musical structures, musical manipulations of sound and . . . an understanding of ways in which composers . . . have organized sound into meaningful statements.'[8] This shared foundation, however, very quickly falls by the wayside as students choose a specific area of focus (performance, education, composition, musicology, theory, etc.), and the initial common foundation then evolves in very different directions. Comparing the focuses on performance and musicology, we generally end up with graduate students and professionals who seemingly have nothing in common.[9]

If I consider singers specifically, one of the key distinctions that characterizes this 'parting of the ways' is the singer's early focus on the development of technique, while occasionally neglecting the importance of 'musicality'. There are several reasons for this. One is an overwhelming bias amongst teachers of singing (particularly in North America) to prioritize sound over expression in the voice, particularly in the early stages of training.[10] Another is of pure necessity, as most singers have only been 'playing their instrument' for a very short time when they begin their post-secondary training, and thus need to come to grips with an instrument that is forever changing with age. Regardless of the reasons, it is a fact that the overwhelming tendency of teachers in early post-secondary education is to focus on technique to the detriment of issues of expression and musical understanding.[11]

Consider, on the other hand, the musicologist, who can put all frustrations with singing or playing technique aside and focus on musical construction and context. Of course, this also involves a process and an evolution, but the abandonment of concerns with musical execution and creation clearly facilitates the intellectual pursuit of musical understanding.

The final words in both of the previous paragraphs were 'musical understanding', and at first it might appear that these refer to the same phenomenon. Perhaps before the 'parting of the ways' it even *is* a shared concept, but of course at this early developmental stage this concept

Education Research, vol. 6, no. 2, 2004, pp. 169-177.

7 I know of no statistic which confirms this fact, but I know of very few professional performers who did not study music in some structured post-secondary institution. Where exceptions exist, these tend to be singers, probably because the voice is an instrument that develops with age, and thus some people only discover this instrument later in life.

8 C. Durrant & G. Welch, *Making sense of music: Foundations for music education*, London, Cassel, 1995, p. 11.

9 In Europe this distinction is even more marked, as the beginning of post-secondary study already separates the two: performance, education, and composition are taught at the conservatory; music history and theory at the university.

10 This is probably due to a bias in aesthetics in North American classical singing toward large voices singing in large halls.

11 V. Ward, 'The performance teacher as music analyst: a case study', *International Journal of Music Education*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2004, p. 249.

has only partially evolved. By the time students complete their post-secondary programmes, 'musical understanding' has developed differently for performers and academics alike. This separation continues as musicologists and performers go on to their post-graduate studies or professional performing careers. From this point the distinction only increases, as does the disconnect between performers and academics.

On-going professional activities

For the musicologists who 'stick with it' the path is generally pretty clear: master's degree, PhD, post-doctoral job, academic appointment, tenure, retirement. While there may be some bumps along the road, the professional trajectory is for all intents and purposes *linear*.[12]

The performer's career path, on the other hand, is far less clear-cut. There are some 'shared' issues that performers need to deal with in western art music, particularly the acquisition of skills in self-discipline, memory, concentration, control of the emotions, and dealing with performance anxiety, to name but a few (and all these just to get a performer to his first audition). On the heels of this is the need to learn how to function within a group setting in rehearsal and performance. And throughout all of these purely professional concerns is the necessity to continually 'keep in shape' vocally and technically, and develop time-management skills to stay on top of learning repertoire. Certainly the dynamics in play in professional performers' careers are highly subjective, but the evolution is clearly *cyclical*.

> Artistry involves the ability to make performance more than the sum of its parts, including the influences of history, analysis and much else (not least the technical dimension, so often ignored in the literature on performance). Artistry involves close and peripheral vision all at once, especially in the moment of truth.[13]

Certainly the cyclical nature of the performer's career is also highly complex, as the various relationships at play are not only numerous, but often blurring the line between personal and professional. For example, my teacher may be my friend, or my prodigal daughter may be my conductor.

The chart below is by no means exhaustive (I purposely left out 'enemy' from the collection of personal relationships), but it clearly indicates not only the multitude of relationships, but also the multitude of potentially delicate if not outright difficult 'cross-over' relationships that one often has to negotiate.[14] Combine this with the daily challenge of learning repertoire and maintaining technique, the financial insecurity of a free-lance career, and the pressure of the actual performance event itself. How does the professional performer manage it all?

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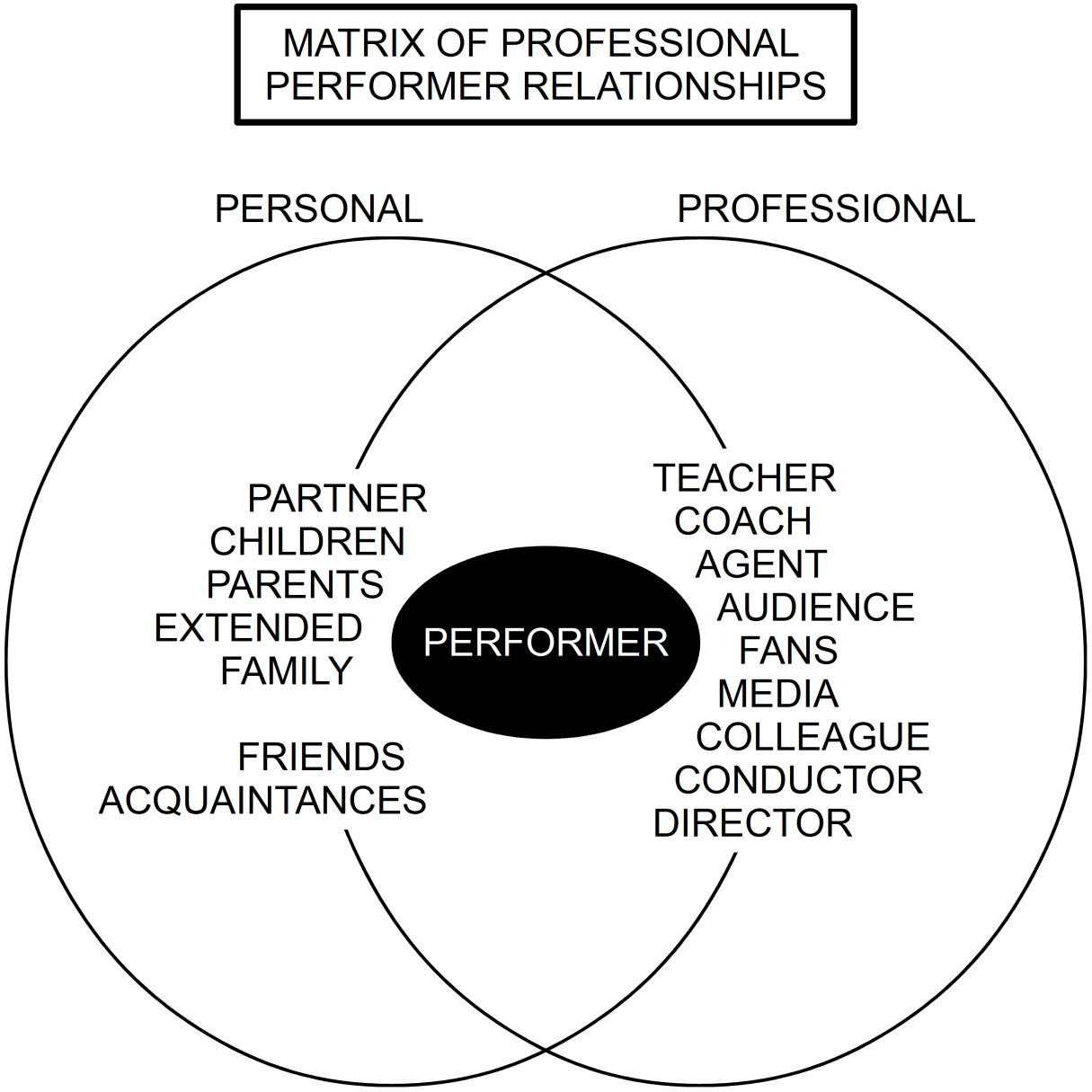
12 Perhaps I grossly exaggerate this claim. To be clear, I never made it past the early PhD stage.

13 J. Rink, 'In respect of performance: The View from Musicology', *Psychology of Music*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2003, p. 320.

14 Certainly similar 'cross-overs' occur in every field, but usually not with such frequency as they do with professional performers.



In an analysis of the performer-practice dynamic, Peter Hill writes: '. . . the central dilemma of the performing musician [is how] can we work . . . without losing enthusiasm or the open-mindedness that enables our ideas to develop?'[15] But is this really a dilemma? Perhaps none of us knew what we were getting ourselves into when we first decided to become full-time performers, but we certainly figured it out early in the game. At the end of the day, if or when we as performers lose our enthusiasm, we do something new (either a new piece, or a new profession, depending on the severity).[16]

15 P. Hill, 'From score to sound' in J. Rink (ed.) *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 131.

16 Perhaps even focus one's attention more on academic research, as Hill himself has done (if I may assume that his academic appointment means he is not working full-time as a professional performer).

For myself, I like models and systems to help organize and deal with this continual ebb and flow of the professional life (this book being an example of just the means by which I learn my scores). This is how I developed technique at an early stage, and this is how I learned and continue to learn how to make music. My process as a student and as a professional goes something like this:

1. learn a skill or principle (from a teacher, coach, colleague, conductor, director, or book)
2. see how this affects my vocal production
3. see how this affects my musical expression
4. see how these changes are received by others (colleagues, conductors, audiences, critics)
5. make intellectual/aesthetic choices about whether I embrace or reject the principle

Certainly this is a very personal system, but the choices I ultimately make both technically and musically are constantly facing a system of 'checks and balances' that has very real professional and economic consequences. Firstly, I am continually being judged for the quality of my work by my colleagues, but also by audiences, the media, and even academics. Second, in the rehearsal-performance process shared ideologies and principles of making music (if not also technique) facilitate and ameliorate the rehearsal and performance process (especially since limited time is normally a concern), and my musical and technical decisions either assist or hinder this process. At the end of the day, I receive confirmation that I have made the appropriate choices if I continue to be hired.

Community

Above, I made the multitude of personal and/or professional relationships that a performer must deal with sound rather dreadful. But this community is also the epicentre of all that is great in the music profession (and indeed all the performing arts). A performance is truly a remarkable human phenomenon: a group of people, doing something they love and have dedicated their lives to doing, come together with a common creative goal; another group of people, who share a similar love, come to witness the creation; and, at the end of the performance, it is theoretically possible that every single person goes home happy!

The concept of community will return later, but before moving on to other matters, I should like to summarize the preceding discussion.

Position 4:

Full-time professional performers in the western art-music tradition characteristically share similarities in types of training and continued professional activities, including:

- **studying music in a post-secondary institution**
- **studying privately with an applied-music teacher**
- **regular private practice to maintain and ameliorate technique**
- **regular private practice to learn new repertoire**
- **rehearsing (with others) for professional engagements**
- **performing publicly (with others) in professional engagements**
- **balancing their personal and professional lives and relationships**

What is 'music' to the performer?

After completing my masters in performance, I decided to try my hand again at scholarship, and ended up in the UK.[17] During my first year as a masters student I fell in love with music aesthetics, where I was first introduced to the philosophical concept of a 'musical work'. I could never really wrap my head around this discussion, to be honest, although certain lines of thinking did seem to resonate with me as they connected the work concept specifically with the score.

> Central to Western conceptions of the musical work is the existence of a published score. The purpose of a score is primarily to preserve music, but it also facilitates its reproduction, and this is clearly central to the continued existence of a work, ensuring that it has an afterlife.[18]

> The notated text is no longer the definer of a musical composition as we understand it . . . it is no more than a definer of a specific moment in the evolving history of the composition: it presents only those elements that a copyist, printer, or performer felt were important.[19]

The resonance with me, however, is rather unpleasant. Sure, I think it is great that some musicologists think the score is important (even if they are more interested in preservation than performance), and also that they want to incorporate the interpreter's role in the existence of a piece of music, and to 'consider the musical work in its wider, intertextual context, as the site of intersecting cultural texts'.[20] But ultimately, these explanations seem incredibly distant from any concept a performer has of the thing they study and perform.

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17 I cannot deny that I was somewhat yearning to do the kind of intellectual work I was used to in my undergraduate course. However, it was also a professional move, as I had work opportunities with professional choirs in Oxford and London, and ultimately wanted to work as a singer in continental Europe.

18 D. Beard and K. Gloag, 'Work' in *Musicology: The Key Concepts*, London, Routledge, 2005, p. 190.

19 S. Boorman, 'The Musical Text', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 420.

20 Beard and Gloag, p. 191.

> In short, we seem to have forgotten that music is a performance art at all, and more than that, we seem to have conceptualized it in such a way that we could hardly think of it that way even if we wanted to.[21]

So to 'bring music back to life', or at least to resuscitate it in some way in the musicological vocabulary, we must reconcile our differences and define what 'music' means as it relates to performers and performance. Some writers in performance studies have already provided some clues. Nicholas Cook has commented that 'composers and performers collaborate in the creation and maintenance of the repertory'[22] if one sees the piece of music existing 'in the relation between its notation and the field of its performance'.[23] And Peter Hill has commented that music 'is something imagined, first by the composer, then in partnership with the performer, and ultimately communicated in sound.'[24]

These seem far more relevant to the concept of music as a performing art, but if I am to be really honest, something is still lacking. And I think this is because, in the western art-music tradition specifically, we as performers tend to defer to the composer in the collaborative partnership, and our primary means of doing this is via the score. In other words, we believe that what the composer wrote is the best possible way to transmit his musical imagination, and we want to do our best to communicate that as the composer intended. That we are also human, and creative beings ourselves, is obvious; thus, it is inevitable that part of our imagination will attach itself to the music during the creation of a performance.

Position 5:

> **The musical work classical performers strive to perform is a hypothetical ideal of what a composer intended. The very nature of music as a performing art indicates that this hypothetical ideal includes the subjectivity of performers, which is why various performances of the same work can theoretically be equally ideal even if exceptionally different.**

Macro or Micro?

If we can now agree, for the purposes of my argument, what music *is*, we now have the huge difficulty of discussing what we do with it. For this issue we need to jump from the musical philosophers to the music theorists, and I suddenly find myself back at the beginning of this narrative as an obstinate graduate student refusing to make bubble charts. What gives?

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21 N. Cook, 'Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance', *Music Theory Online*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2001, paragraph 6.

22 N. Cook, 'Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis' in N. Cook & M. Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 245.

23 Lawrence Rosenwald, 'Theory, Text-setting, and Performance', *Journal of Musicology*, v. 11, 1993, p. 62.

24 Hill, p. 129.

Perhaps those common first-year undergraduate courses in theory and history left a more lasting impression on some performers than I at first expected. Even today I am still somewhat surprised that some performers (and even some really famous ones) feel that historical contexts and traditional theoretical models are directly relevant to their professional performance work. I wouldn't go as far as to say that these things are irrelevant, but in my completely biased opinion, they are only relevant indirectly as a clarification of or foundation in musical grammar (theory) and musical style (history).[25] If a performer has learned these, or more importantly, learned *how* to learn these (as these explorations are indeed life-long pursuits of a professional performer), he would be better to get on with making music.

With that digression complete, I can now direct myself to the academics and say: there is a way to augment your theoretical understanding of music, but it involves a fundamental shift in focus from the macro- to microstructures in a composition. Traditionally, analysis as an academic discipline 'is concerned with a search for internal coherence within a musical work' and focuses on 'an examination of a work's internal structure'.[26] Basic theory and analysis, as we learned as undergraduates, provide a common terminology for discussing the 'mechanics' of music. However, 'To go beyond mechanical conversions of musical notation into written words, analysis must uncover something beyond or behind the mere sonic surface.'[27] This all sounds well and good, yet from my perspective 'internal coherence' and 'internal structure' somehow morphed into a rather narrow focus on musical 'unity' which still pervades music analysis.

One of performance studies' strongest advocates is John Rink who has written extensively on the subject, and was even the originator of the term 'performer's analysis'. Rink attempted to integrate new ideas into an analytical model focusing on concepts of temporality in which performances are referred to as 'musical narratives'. His vocabulary includes phrases like '*grande ligne*', 'sense of shape in time', 'hierarchy of temporally defined musical gestures from the small to the large scale', all implying that a work's totality is at the heart of a performance.[28] However, at the end of the day, in reading Rink's work,[29] I still get the sense that his concepts of what music *is* and of what professional performers *do* are not fully in accord. He even explicitly states that his 'shape' is analogous to 'structure',[30] which gives me the feeling that his discourse is a traditional 'search for musical unity' veiled in performance-friendly language. Whatever the terminology, this type of analysis is clearly more concerned with the macro than with the micro.

25 In a music education context I have previously referred to this division as the difference between studying 'inherent meaning' or the study of music for music's sake and 'delineated meaning' or the study of music as culture. See: Skelton.

26 Beard and Gloag, pp. 11-12.

27 R. Parker and C. Abbate (eds), *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989, pp. 1-2.

28 J. Rink, 'Translating musical meaning: the nineteenth-century performer as narrator', in N. Cook & M. Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 218; J. Rink, 'The State of Play in Performance Studies' in J. W. Davidson (ed.), *The Music Practitioner: Research for the Music Performer, Teacher and Listener*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004, p. 46.

29 Much of Rink's analyses involve graphic representations of the score, which I can't help but think of as bubble charts on steroids.

30 Rink (2004), p. 44.

Something quite different can be read in the following passage by Nicholas Cook, the 'other' prolific scholar working in performance studies:

> What happens in the performance of music like [a Mozart quartet]? The players may well play the notes exactly as Mozart wrote them. And yet they don't play them exactly as Mozart wrote them, because every note in the score is subject to the contextual negotiation of intonation, precise dynamic value, articulation, timbral quality, and so forth. . . This kind of social interaction takes place in the interstices of the score, in the zones of indeterminacy incorporated within it: either because the notation doesn't specify something at all (timbre, for example, beyond the specification of the instrument), or because the score supplies a categorical value that isn't intended for literal execution but instead needs to be negotiated and refined in performance. . . [T]he score choreographs a series of ongoing social engagements between players, setting up a shared framework or goal (a shared mission, if you like) but delegating detailed decisions to be made in real time by the relevant individuals in light of local conditions--to be improvised, in short, as so much in everyday life is.[31]

This passage sheds light on almost everything relating to performers and performance that is missing from music theory's traditional analytical models. At the same time, it gives the reader no insight into the most interesting questions of 'why?' and 'how?'. Why don't they play the notes 'exactly as Mozart wrote them'? Was Mozart's imagination incapable of concepts like intonation, articulation, and timbre? How does 'social interaction' take place in the 'interstices of the score'? How does the score 'choreograph' and 'delegate'? What on earth is a 'zone of indeterminacy'? As a performer, I can infer almost everything about the score-performer relationship in this analysis, but by referring only to 'the work' (rather than a specific event in the work) it hardly says anything at all.

What if 'the whole' isn't actually relevant to either what the performer does, or how the audience listens? It may not be the case, but I think many musicologists would be surprised to discover that it is not so far from the truth.

Score-reading

One of the root causes of conflict between musicologists and performers (and of my particular gripe with most analysis) is, quite simply, the score. While much debate revolves around what music is, I think the one thing we can all agree on is the identity of a score: musical notation in a fixed form on paper.[32] Certainly scores come in many different varieties (manuscripts, original editions, *urtext* editions, critical editions, etc.), but unless one has the specific project of comparing various scores of the same work, we can usually define one score that will be the basis for our performance or study.[33] If we draw the connection to the position I made on what music is to a performer, the score's identity and purpose is clear.

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31 N. Cook, 'Prompting Performance: Text, Script, and Analysis in Bryn Harrison's *être-temps*', *Music Theory Online*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2005, paragraph 5.

32 Or if you want to embrace modern technology, on your portable electronic device.

33 This is almost a necessity in the performance world, as working from different editions can have significant consequences in rehearsals – though usually just because people can't co-ordinate a place to start.

Position 6:

The score is the primary device in the transmission of the composer's imagination to the realization in sound, and the performer the agent through whom this transmission takes place.

This being stated, I would hazard a guess that what the same score *says* is understood very differently by a professional performer and an academic. I think the main reason why so much of performance studies has shied away from western art music and musical scores in favour of folk and popular music and recordings is a rather embarrassing fact, that academics aren't very good at reading music. Sure, they may have scored higher than all the performance majors in their undergraduate *solfège* course, but did they sing with good intonation, solid breath-support, balanced resonance, evenness of tone, a clean legato line, and perfect diction?[34] The point is, when an academic looks at a score his consideration generally only encompasses mechanical levels (pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, etc.). He may understand on a general level that other things are at play, but what these 'things' are and certainly what they entail seem a mystery. No wonder there is such an obsession with macroevents – they are the only things that can make the music interesting on the purely mechanical level.

When the professional performer sees a score, he must immediately balance the mechanics of the score with the mechanics of making sound, which together make 'music'. It is this balance that is the focus of this entire book. As professional performers we work our entire careers in attaining and maintaining this balance, and I would suggest that if you want to be involved in performance studies (and hopefully include some consideration of performers) you can hardly do so without seeking to understand and explore it.

Cook has concluded that,

> The text-based orientation of traditional musicology and theory hampers thinking about music as a performance art. Music can be understood as both process and product, but it is the relationship between the two that defines "performance" in the Western "art" tradition.[35]

I think Cook's explanation (second sentence) hits the nail on the head. But his initial claim (first sentence) is absolutely false. If the score, the 'text' is the basis for our work as performers, how can it possibly hamper thinking about music as a performance art? The score as a device of transmission is unique to music. Even if the music is vocal and includes a written text, music notation transcends the confines of a spoken or written language, and at the same time focuses the means of communication. The score is, at the same time, greatly liberating and highly restrictive. The problem is not the text-based orientation at all, but rather a limited, incomplete ability to read the text.

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34 Even *do, re, mi* have exact consonants and vowels!

35 Cook (2001), abstract.

Deconstruction (and reconstruction) in performance

I was pleasantly surprised to discover during my research for this chapter that the term 'deconstruction' is already included in musicological discourse. It is even a 'key concept' (if its inclusion in David Beard and Kenneth Gloag's book *Musicology: The Key Concepts* is any indication).[36] The fact that it seems to bear some relationship to how I have used the term in this book's method is all the more astounding. Deconstruction is apparently not a methodology or a system, but rather

> involves a process 'always already' present in the text, and the deconstructive reading is one that involves the identification and explication of this presence as a counter-logic to what may initially appear to be the most logical and natural interpretation.[37]

Moreover,

> A typical strategy of deconstruction may involve consideration of something that may appear incidental or marginal in a text, something that is quickly passed over in pursuit of a main narrative or argument.[38]

The vocabulary in the above quotations uses 'text' and 'reading' because the idea of deconstruction stems from the work of French philosopher and literary theorist Jacques Derrida, and is most generally applied to written texts. Even if the concept of deconstruction seems most applicable in musicology to what we write and say about it,[39] I find the application to music analysis and performance a useful, even necessary direction to follow.

In response to the traditional preoccupation in music analysis with a search for 'unity', and John Rink's use of the term 'musical narrative', I posed the following question above:

> What if 'the whole' isn't actually relevant to either what the performer does, or how the audience listens?

In truth, I believe this statement to be false. I think 'the whole' *is* relevant to a performance, and is even at the heart of it; but at the same time, I do not believe that the performer normally is, or even should be, concerned with 'the whole' during the performative act. For me, the creation of 'unity' or a 'musical narrative' is the job of the composer. If the performer is true to the score (successful in creating the 'hypothetical ideal') then this sense of totality is self-evident in a performance.[40]

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36 Beard and Gloag, 'Deconstruction', pp. 50-54.

37 Beard and Gloag, p. 51.

38 Beard and Gloag, p. 52.

39 Beard and Gloag, p. 53.

40 This is particularly true after the mid-eighteenth century, when composers began to compose with more specific tempo and dynamic indications. Even in Baroque and earlier repertoires I would argue that the composer has done most of this 'musical narration' work in the compositional process; the only differences are the parameters by which these narratives were/are understood. I would argue that in music from the mid-seventeenth century and earlier, composers thought of structure more relatively, that is, not in the context of the whole but of what comes before and after. This certainly has implications (even up to the mid-eighteenth

What preoccupies the performer, particularly in the performance itself, is the execution of a specific note, in a specific way, at a specific time. The *'grande ligne'* may lurk somewhere underneath these individual moments, but it is physically impossible to *create* sound except in the here and now. What I speak of are, quite simply, the *details* of the score, or in deconstructive parlance those sections of a text that are 'incidental' or 'marginal'.

For a truly attentive and engaged audience – by which I mean an audience that goes to a performance trusting that the composer and performers will do their respective jobs well – I would also argue that their manner of listening favours the 'details' over the whole *in the performance itself*. Thoughts of totality and completeness generally only come to an audience (and for that matter, performers also) after the fact, as a recollection or memory of the performance event.[41] To break it down, we speak of the performance 'as a whole', in direct connection with the number of and manner in which details of the score are executed and communicated by the performers to the audience. The relative success or failure of a performance, of course, depends on the subjective evaluation of said execution and communication.

Earlier I was rather critical of Cook's Mozart quartet analysis, basically saying that it refers to almost everything about the score-performer relationship, but at the same time says nothing about why these relationships are interesting or important. If I might might answer the 'why': they are interesting because they are representative of a deconstructive analysis of the score mixed with a culmination of years of training and score study, and they are important because they are unequivocally necessary for the creation of a musical performance.

If I may apply the methodology I have presented in this book, let us consider the performer's process when looking at just the first note of a score, for the first time, in a first attempt to produce it. The initial step is to determine what the notation says regarding a note's pitch and duration, and determine (whether explicitly written or not), the volume, intonation, and timbre this note should/could possess in sound (deconstruction). Next, the mind must decipher the technical process by which this note may be produced, and finally the body must execute the note, which is the process I like to call 'reconstruction'. This process can be spread out over a very long period of time in the practice room, but it can equally happen in an instant during a first reading. Indeed, for many performers, the entire deconstructive analysis can take place when first looking at a score; and if that was not remarkable enough, when a first reading coincides with a first play-through, they are able to apply a reconstructive analysis simultaneously to create music in sound.

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century) in reference to dynamics, which were rarely composed as a *necessary* structural parameter; in fact, dynamics in many Baroque compositions were only a *performance* indication that a soloist was singing/playing or not.

41 Carl Dahlhaus wrote: 'Insofar as music is form, it attains its real existence, paradoxically expressed, at the very moment when it is past. Still held firm in memory, it emerges into a condition that it never entered during its immediate presence; and at a distance it constitutes itself as a surveyable plastic form. Spatialization and form, emergence and objectivity, are interdependent: one is the support or precondition of the other.' C. Dahlhaus, *Esthetics of Music*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 12.

Objective vs. subjective – implying or describing?

Can anyone explain to me the obsession with meaning? When first introduced to the concept in music aesthetics I found the discussion fascinating. I even found a practical application for philosophical distinctions of meaning when considering a possible future in elementary and secondary music education.[42] But in connection with music performance?

> Hanslick argued that emotions like longing, hope, or love depend on a formal object, in the absence of which . . . "all that remains is an unspecific stirring, perhaps the awareness of a general sense of well-being or distress." . . . Hanslick is arguing that music is highly ineffective as a means of conveying emotion, but what it *does* convey is nuance.[43]

Thus music conveys 'emotionless nuance'.[44] I like this terminology in the context of performance studies, as 'nuance' implies details, and my entire idea of good performance lies in the attention to the details – musical nuance. We understand *what* words like 'meaning', 'emotion', and 'nuance' imply, but *how* does music lead us to these words in the first place?

Cook would have us believe that

> the experience of music as emotionless nuance is one that cannot be translated, even approximately, into words, because the necessary interpretive decisions are not contained within it. One can use words to exemplify possible actualized meanings emerging out of such an expression, but then one is no longer describing the original experience.[45]

Perhaps *objectively* this is true, but this objective 'emotionlessness' may elicit a highly emotional *subjective* response in the listener, which probably is pretty important in the grand scheme of professional music-making.

But my critiques on these issues will be infinite, because the issues themselves point to a problematic focus in performance studies. In the context of performance studies I'm not really concerned with *how* meaning is constructed in a performance; in fact, I'm not even that interested in *what* music means. Of course what we perform or listen to *means* something to us, but what it means is so highly subjective as to make its study either completely pointless, or utterly obvious (and thus completely pointless). Far more fascinating is the *means by which* meaning is expressed and received in a musical performance.

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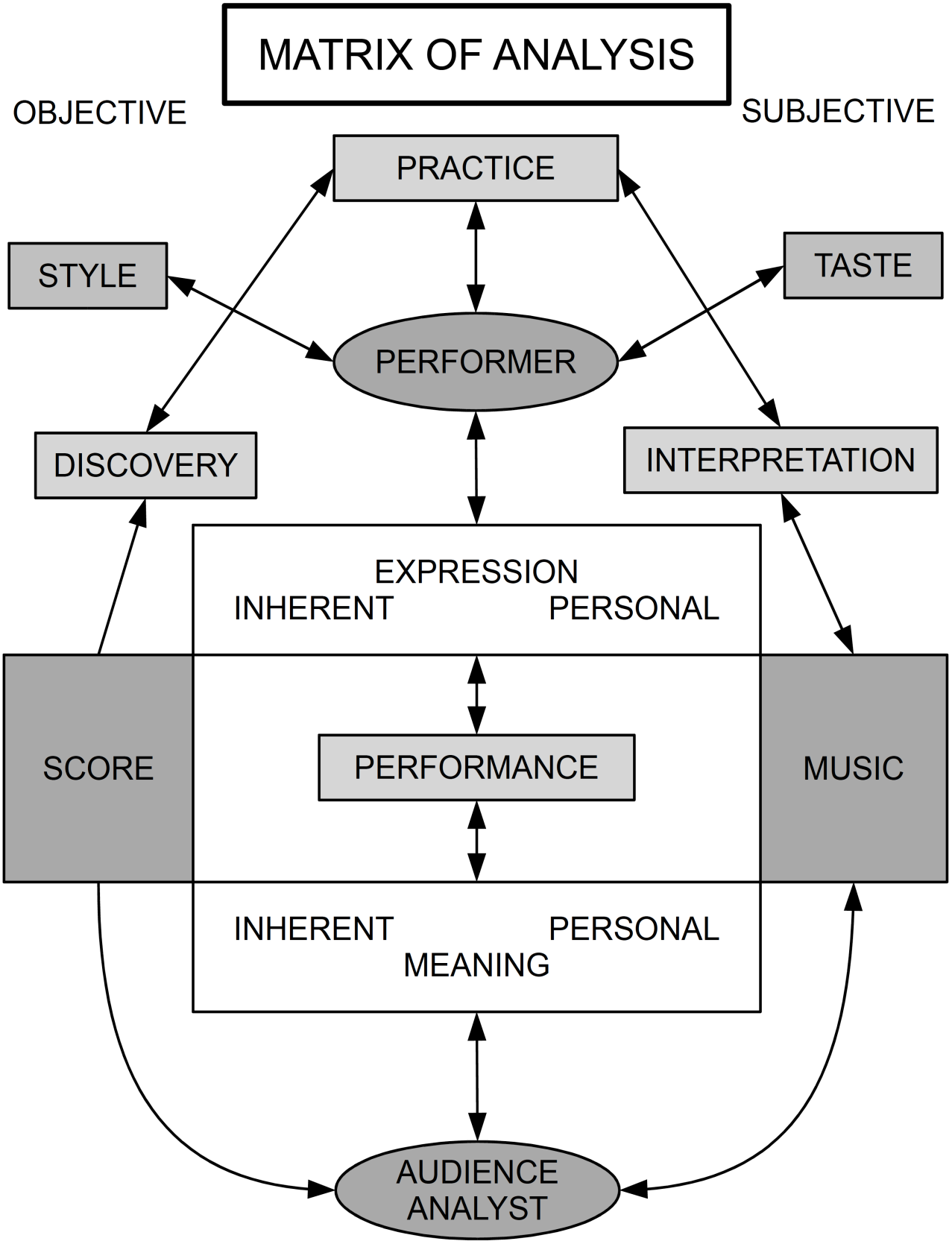
42 See: Skelton (2004).

43 N. Cook, 'Theorizing Musical Meaning' in *Music, Performance, Meaning: selected essays*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007, p. 224; E. Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful* (trans. G. Payzant), Hackett Publishing, 1986, p. 9.

44 Cook (2007), p. 224.

45 Cook (2007), pp. 231-232.


MATRIX OF ANALYSIS
OBJECTIVE
SUBJECTIVE
PRACTICE
STYLE
TASTE
PERFORMER
DISCOVERY
INTERPRETATION
EXPRESSION
INHERENT
PERSONAL
SCORE
PERFORMANCE
MUSIC
INHERENT
PERSONAL
MEANING
AUDIENCE
ANALYST

The diagram above tries to present nothing more than the multitude of possible relationships one can consider in a performance analysis or performer's analysis on a vague objective-subjective continuum. The ovals are the subjects, and the coloured rectangles contain (from darkest to lightest) a variety of objects, things, and events. The white rectangles contain the variety of associations performers and listeners develop in connection with the performance, the score, and the hypothetical ideal of 'music'. It shows that almost every relationship is a dialogue, and every dialogue has some level of subjectivity connected with it. The one exception is the score. The score never actively engages in dialogue. The score only informs.[46]

The experience and investment that goes into realizing a score naturally results in individually derived 'meanings' which are then 'expressed' in the performance. Perhaps an audience derives the same 'meanings' as the performer, but this is neither likely nor the aim. Performers hope to elicit a response in an audience, to 'touch' them in a positive way. If the music and performance are of a certain aesthetic quality, then the music-performance event permits an audience to experience or feel whatever they would like in the moment or through subsequent association. Indeed the best performers facilitate this subjectivity in their audiences by purposely not dictating or confining meaning beyond the restrictions of the score itself.[47]

So what conclusions may we draw about analysis in performance studies? Perhaps the same as Cook made in the article I quoted above:

> Perhaps . . . we should not be theorizing musical meaning after all, but rather looking for ways of understanding music that are fully attuned to its emergent properties, of which meaning is just one.[48]

46 One could even consider that a sort of dialogue between score and performer exists, as the performer will frequently augment the score through his own markings, and thus 'alters' the score from which he performs. However, I consider such markings rather as a written extension of or assistance with the performer's mental processes in score reading than as an alteration of the 'hypothetical ideal' of the composer. Moreover, if such a dynamic could be considered a dialogue, certainly the score is only a passive participant, and thus still only a linear relationship takes place (though a cyclical relationship with the score takes place in the mind of the performer).

47 One small digression: Programme notes and lecture concerts which talk about the music itself run the risk of shaping audiences' expectations, by attempting to direct their listening. In such cases subjective associative meaning is minimized (or worse, questioned). This may be a good route to take with aesthetically questionable music, or lacklustre performances, but then artistic concerns are clearly secondary to professional ones. Notes and lectures that deal with cultural and historical contexts, on the other hand, help 'set the stage' for the performance, while permitting the performers to still take full responsibility for their work. Related to this discussion is the inclusion of texts and translations in programmes or as surtitles. I would argue these are not necessary, and can be annoying for performers (particularly when audiences cannot take their eyes off them), but ultimately these allow audiences to understand a textual layer if they so choose, and they should be given that choice.

48 Cook (2007), p. 236.

Position 7:

An analysis should clearly define whether it aims to be objective and implicit or subjective and descriptive, and then remain true to this ideology.

The 'means by which' is a predominantly, if not exclusively, objective form of analysis, which ironically maintains the fundamental nature of the performance itself by presenting and expressing 'meaning' without dictating what that might be.

A New Age what?

I would like to make a small digression here. This section aims to offer some explanation of the curious title I have given this chapter, in addition to pointing out two very important elements of the performer's work and craft. These elements I can best describe as psychological and spiritual.

Earlier I alluded to the psychological element in defining a full-time professional performer and in describing the performer's on-going professional activities. I implied that there is something about the mindset of the full-time professional performer that is subtly but quite distinctly different from those performers who seek professional and/or financial security in other lines of work. This element can best be described as 'mental toughness', and requires a great deal of discipline and/or predisposition if one hopes to establish and maintain a successful performing career. I will not go into this issue in depth, as it has been dealt with effectively and thoughtfully in *Power Performance for Singers: Transcending the Barriers* by Shirlee Emmons and Alma Thomas.

What I would like to consider in more detail is perhaps best described as the spiritual element in the life of a performer, which in fact connects to the little-discussed but perhaps universally accepted spiritual element of music in general. Though I find the image of music scholars taking hallucinogenic substances and burning incense quite humorous, I have invented the term 'New Age Musicology' with a clearly ironic reference to the 'New Musicology' that has (in my rather biased opinion) plagued music analysis (if not all of musicology) for decades. On the one hand I think it is a wonderful idea to integrate postmodernism into musical discourse, but I can't help feeling that this initiative has often been taken to the extreme, in which one can scarcely discover where 'music' fits into musicology. In relation to performance studies specifically (at least in the western art-music tradition) I think objectivity and subjectivity (or, in 'New Musicology' lingo, positivism and relativism) are of equal relevance as we try and grapple with the basis of performance (the score) on the one hand, and the numerous dialogues that lead to performance itself on the other.

But 'New Age Musicology' has an even more direct implication for me in that I feel that the music profession (performers and academics alike) should begin to acknowledge, maybe even begin to believe, that we *do* have something very important in common. I suspect, since you are reading this book and/or chapter, that you made the practice and/or study of music your profession for the same reason as I did: because you love music. Most of us probably first discovered this love at a young age, even if the decision to pursue it more seriously only came later. For those who did proceed to post-secondary studies in music, you probably also had some private lessons in an instrument and developed some musical interests and tastes outside of or in addition to the pop music that was the mainstay of your peers at school. And probably for the majority of your youth you had no other concept of music than your experience of playing, singing, and listening to it. How can it be that young children, who otherwise have the attention span of a goldfish, can love listening to the same piece of music over and over again?[49] Who on earth would read about music when they are young? Lydia Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* was never read as a bed-time story, as enticing as the title may be.

All of us were welcomed into the wonderful world of music through the physical activities of listening and singing and/or playing. But perhaps the connection with music is even deeper than a similar initiation process. Perhaps this initiation was actually a glimpse into a shared experience that we cannot prove exists, but that we all know is there. Perhaps, contrary to all logical thought, there really is an 'absolute truth' which is not any specific piece of music, but something that all music connects us with in some way. The famous jazz musician Bill Evans once said: 'I believe that all people are in possession of what might be called a universal mind. Any true music speaks with this universal mind to the universal mind in all people.'[50]

Kenny Werner does not shy away from such ideas in his book *Effortless Mastery*, one of the most influential books I have read in the pursuit of performance excellence. Werner promotes spiritual awareness for the performing musician as a necessary element in achieving mastery in one's chosen profession.

> Music, unencumbered by unhealthy constraints, induces a state of ecstasy in the musician and audience. Music is there for our enjoyment and enrichment. Music is literally the sound of joy and devotion. It is a gift from God to allow us to express the incredible ecstasy of our inner nature. Falling short of that, music lays itself at our feet for expressing any of the countless feelings associated with the human condition.[51]

How is that for a 'work concept'?

And an addendum to the section 'Who are performers? What do they do?' above:

49 Just as I don't think popular and folk music would benefit from intense musicological scrutiny, I think the same applies to the majority of the music that is the obsession of young children. That being said, I would gladly read any sociological or psychological study that could explain why children like, for instance, the Wiggles.

50 Bill Evans, *The Universal Mind of Bill Evans: The Creative Process and Self Teaching*, Rhapsody Films Inc., 1991.

51 K. Werner, *Effortless Mastery: Liberating the Master Musician Within*, New Albany, Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 1996, p. 43.

> As musicians/healers, it is our destiny to conduct an inward search, and to document it with our music so that others may benefit. As they listen to the music coming through us, they too are inspired to look within.[52]

Like many spiritual teachers, Werner encourages letting go of the ego as a means to perform and experience music more completely. He describes the ego as 'the lens through which we perceive our separateness from each other'[53] and this separation is what prevents us as musicians from connecting firstly with our instruments and ultimately with our audiences. Werner concludes: 'The highest state a musician can be in is a *selfless state*.'[54] What he is really describing and ultimately teaching is how to permit one's technique and talent to connect with a larger and higher force that is universally understood and accepted, but at the same time intangible and inexplicable.

Effortless Mastery was recommended to me by the most important musical influence in my early training, if not my entire career – Douglas Bodle. Douglas always referred to his students as his 'spiritual children', and more and more I think that we should have been calling him our 'spiritual father', as he exposed me, and I know many others, to a connection with music that was nothing short of, well, spiritual. Douglas referred to himself as the world's most frustrated singer, as a childhood accident left him unable to phonate completely. However, his keyboard playing 'sang', and, more influentially for me, he had an uncanny ability to bring out the best in the singers he taught. Sometimes this occurred through the repetition of his 'maxims',[55] but it was more than what he said. To this day, I still cannot explain how he enabled me to overcome many of the technical limitations I then possessed, and thus to feel true vocal freedom and musical expression. Many years later, and after many shifts in the direction of both my personal and professional lives, I think what I experienced with Douglas was, quite simply, a 'release' of myself and my voice to the power of music. Perhaps even part of Douglas was singing through me.

The 'power of music' is rarely referred to in musicological research, which I find rather odd, as it is so integral to the discussions of advocates for school music education, not to mention music in the mainstream media. I think it is even the primary reason why musicologists become musicologists, performers choose to be performers, and audiences choose to attend performances.[56] Perhaps 'we are all connected' as a scholarly premise would be difficult to take seriously, but one will inevitably encounter references to 'the space' in studying performers and performance.[57]

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52 Werner, p. 13.

53 Werner, pp. 52-53.

54 Werner, p. 81.

55 Some examples: 'Sing to the dot, not through the dot'; 'Take your time'; 'Don't rit. until the penultimate note'; 'Make every note beautiful'.

56 I'm not sure if it is true, but Werner does offer a theory of how this 'higher force' may function: 'Actually, music is derived from sound, and sound is composed of vibration. Now we get to the heart of the matter, for all matter is made up of vibrations. It is a scientific fact that, although we see solids when we look at an object, what we are really seeing is fluid vibrations organized in sufficiently gross frequencies to form solid matter. . . We are made up of vibrations. And thus, all things can be said to have music in them.' Werner, p. 33.

57 See Werner, 'The Space', pp. 77-85.

> Everyone can remember at least one great concert they've been to. The performance was so inspired that it stayed with the audience well after they went home. Perhaps the fragrance of it was still there the next day. The feeling it created caused those present to behave differently for a while, possibly with more grace, with more mindfulness of the soul.[58]

I'm not advocating that 'New Age Musicology' should contemplate the spiritual side of music, though of course this is possible. But acknowledging 'the space' in performance studies is clearly relevant in considering both performer psychology and audience reception.

> [L]isteners do not count musical durations in seconds or crotchets or bar-numbers. Their experience of musical time, and hence formal proportions, depends on what fills the time, so that, unlike clock time, musical time is subjective and as variable as musical content.[59]

This assessment by Nicholas Cook on how an audience experiences music reminds me of Eckhart Tolle's differentiation between 'clock time' (time used for practical purposes) and 'psychological time' (time used by the ego to obsess about the past and the future and avoid the present moment or the 'now'). When I combine Cook and Tolle on this issue, I am left with the clear awareness that 'musical time' and the 'now' could quite easily be interchangeable. Tolle writes:

> Time is the horizontal dimension of life, the surface layer of reality. Then there is the vertical dimension of depth, accessible to you only through the portal of the present moment.[60]

What establishes 'musical time' or what 'fills the time' must be those musical moments that strike a listener's senses, or the complete lack of these defined moments, both of which lead to very subjective feelings of the passing of time. One can have the sense of time speeding up, slowing down, or even being suspended altogether.

In his book *The Ascent of Humanity*, Charles Eisenstein makes a compelling case that our entire society has been evolving for centuries with a problematic ideology involving the separation from and objectification of nature. Like Werner and Tolle, Eisenstein's work is based on the assumption (or I would say 'position') that 'We have defined ourselves as other than what we are, as discrete subjects separate from each other and separate from the world around us.'[61]

Eisenstein's discourse is too elaborate to summarize in the present chapter; however, his discussion of language has a direct connection to issues of analysis, performance, reception, and time that I have introduced here. Eisenstein holds that language is the 'foundation of the separate human realm'. And since the symbols of language are mostly arbitrary, language is little more than a 'human-created map or representation of reality'.[62] Moreover, 'By naming

58 Werner, p. 79.
59 N. Cook, 'Musical Form and the Listener', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 46, no. 1, 1987, p. 23.
60 E. Tolle, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2005, pp. 206-207.
61 C. Eisenstein, *The Ascent of Humanity*, Harrisburg, Panenthea Press, 2007, p. 3.
62 Eisenstein, p. 63.

the world, abstracting it and reducing it, we impoverish our perception of it.'[63] Such a statement resonates strongly with me as I reflect on my suspicion of the bubble chart and similar sorts of analysis that seem only to reduce music to a shadow of what can be gleaned from reading the complete score, or listening to a performance.

This being said, Eisenstein's consideration of language also acknowledges that along with language's 'tendency to distance and delude' there resides a creative aspect.[64] He speaks of a mythical 'Original Language' that 'did not symbolize and abstract from reality, but that was itself part of reality.'[65] This 'Original Language', even though modern language and society attempt to suppress it, is still at the core of how we as humans communicate with one another, at least when things really matter.

> Any intensely emotional experience may . . . elicit utterances of the Original Language – spontaneous vocalizations of ecstasy, lamentation, glee, fear, rage, and so forth, as well as the cooing noises we make at infants. They come out when words are simply insufficient to express ourselves, and when our emotions overpower the inhibitions of culture; that is, when we go wild.[66]

In this quotation the 'Original Language' sounds oddly reminiscent of the art of singing, and, by association, the art of music. To be sure, we don't 'go wild' very often, and for our basic sense of security this is probably a good thing. But perhaps we have found a way to assimilate our 'wildness' into something non-threatening if not entirely enjoyable. Perhaps music is the human collective's continual link to the 'Original Language', a protest in plain sight and sound against the ideology of separation and control that language so vigorously hopes to perpetuate.

> Like logic, law, and technology, the control implicit in language is a façade. We carefully label and categorize the whole world, hoping thereby to impose order upon it, to domesticate the wild, but we delude ourselves to think that the wild respects our boundaries any more than a squirrel respects a "no trespassing" sign. To this day, it is the voice that communicates more than the speech.[67]

'Original Language', 'musical time', 'the space', 'universal mind', 'absolute truth', whatever you want to call it, there is something about music that can 'speak' to many people on many levels. As the authors of *Power Performance for Singers* so succinctly write: 'All performance occurs in the present. It is perhaps one of the few moments when a human being lives totally in the moment. It is *now*.'[68]

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63 Eisenstein , p. 65.

64 Creativity is one of the things Eisenstein believes is most important in human society: 'I am suggesting a different conception of God, not as creator but as Creativity itself, not outside the universe but an inseparable property *of* the universe.' Eisenstein, p. 382.

65 Eisenstein, p. 65.

66 Eisenstein, p. 67.

67 Eisenstein, p. 69.

68 S. Emmons & A. Thomas, *Power Performance for Singers: Transcending the Barriers*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 195.

Analysis and performance and performer

Now that we have scraped (for a rather long time) the surface of what a performer does in relation to a score and in bringing that score to life in performance, let's move closer to the ultimate goal of reconciling the differences between performers and musicologists in connection with the process of 'analysis'.

Let's first make a distinction between 'performance-analysis' and 'performer's analysis'. Though they look and sound very similar, they are fundamentally different, in both *what* they look at and *how* they look at it.

'Performance-analysis' is the analysis of performances, although, if we are honest, this should more accurately be called 'recording-analysis' if the focus in performance studies is any indication.

> [T]he most obvious way of studying music as performance is, quite simply, to study those traces or representations of past performances that make up the recorded heritage, thereby unlocking an archive of acoustical texts comparable in extent and significance to the notated texts around which musicology originally came into being.[69]

I'm not so sure about 'most obvious'. Perhaps the following terms would be more honest: 'least challenging', 'least relevant', or just 'laziest'. By studying recordings, musicologists can create new 'texts' and then simply apply the same analytical tools they traditionally apply to a score. For me the 'most obvious' way of studying music as performance is to study performances. The main problem with recordings, both for the performer and the academic (whether to learn music or to study it), is that it can never fully capture the environment in which the performance took place.[70] In part, I mean objective elements like acoustics, lighting, and visual aesthetics; but on a more profound level, I mean the very real and obvious communication between performers on stage, and even between performers and the audience. In short, a recording can never capture the 'atmosphere' of the performance event, which often has profound implications for the music, and ultimately is what makes performance so special (including all those spiritual elements discussed in 'A New Age what?' above).[71]

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69 Cook (2001), paragraph 21.

70 Studying via recording is generally looked down upon in the classical music (and particularly singing) profession, as it usually implies an immense inadequacy in the ability to read music. If reliance on recordings is so ill-thought-of for a performer, should this not also be the same standard for a musicologist? After all, from the performer's perspective you either can read music or you can't; in my opinion, as relates to performance analysis, you can either 'read' a performance or you can't.

71 Rink has even remarked on the disconnect between data gleaned through analytic comparisons of recordings and audience reception. In reference to the issue of tempo Rink concludes: 'Performed music is, of course, rarely metronomic, but musically trained listeners – and performers – tend to sense a fictitiously constant tempo. . . The incontrovertible 'facts' of the performance as expressed by the data reveal only a partial and perhaps misleading truth – which is a salutary lesson both for psychologists and for those studying recordings.' Rink (2004), p. 39.

'Performer's analysis', in contrast, is 'an analytical mode which allows performers to be performers rather than mere agents of the theorist.'[72] This is a term that John Rink developed after reaching the same conclusions about the role of analysis in the performer's work that I described above.[73] The recognition of 'performer's analysis' has been echoing in the annals of academia at least as far back as 1973:

> The performance of a piece of music is . . . the actualization of an analytic act – even though such analysis may have been intuitive and unsystematic . . . analysis is implicit in what the performer does.[74]

However, as far as I can find in print, the only real representations of 'performer's analysis' to date are found in the subjective responses of musicologists to recordings they study and music they play on the piano, and the anecdotal memoirs of performers. Surely we can do more.

Future avenues for performer's analysis

Music as a performing art

At this point I hope I have established a solid foundation for exploring performer's analysis, even if it may feel a bit like an impossible sea of relationships and dialogues to wade through. But my point in this chapter was by no means to define what performer's analysis *should* be, but rather to present the infinite number of possible avenues one *could* take, provided we can agree on some ground rules and principles.

While I don't want to come across as being anti-social, I think the most important thing that first needs to happen for academic research in performer's analysis to be fruitful (if not all of performance studies) is for academics to clearly acknowledge their position in the 'Matrix of Music Performance' (see below). With this diagram I have reinvented the bubble chart to establish a hierarchy surrounding musical performance that is not specifically connected to western art music. The central bubble contains the objective centrepiece(s), the middle bubble those people directly linked to making the performance possible, and the outer bubble persons who may be indirectly involved, but potentially completely dispensable.

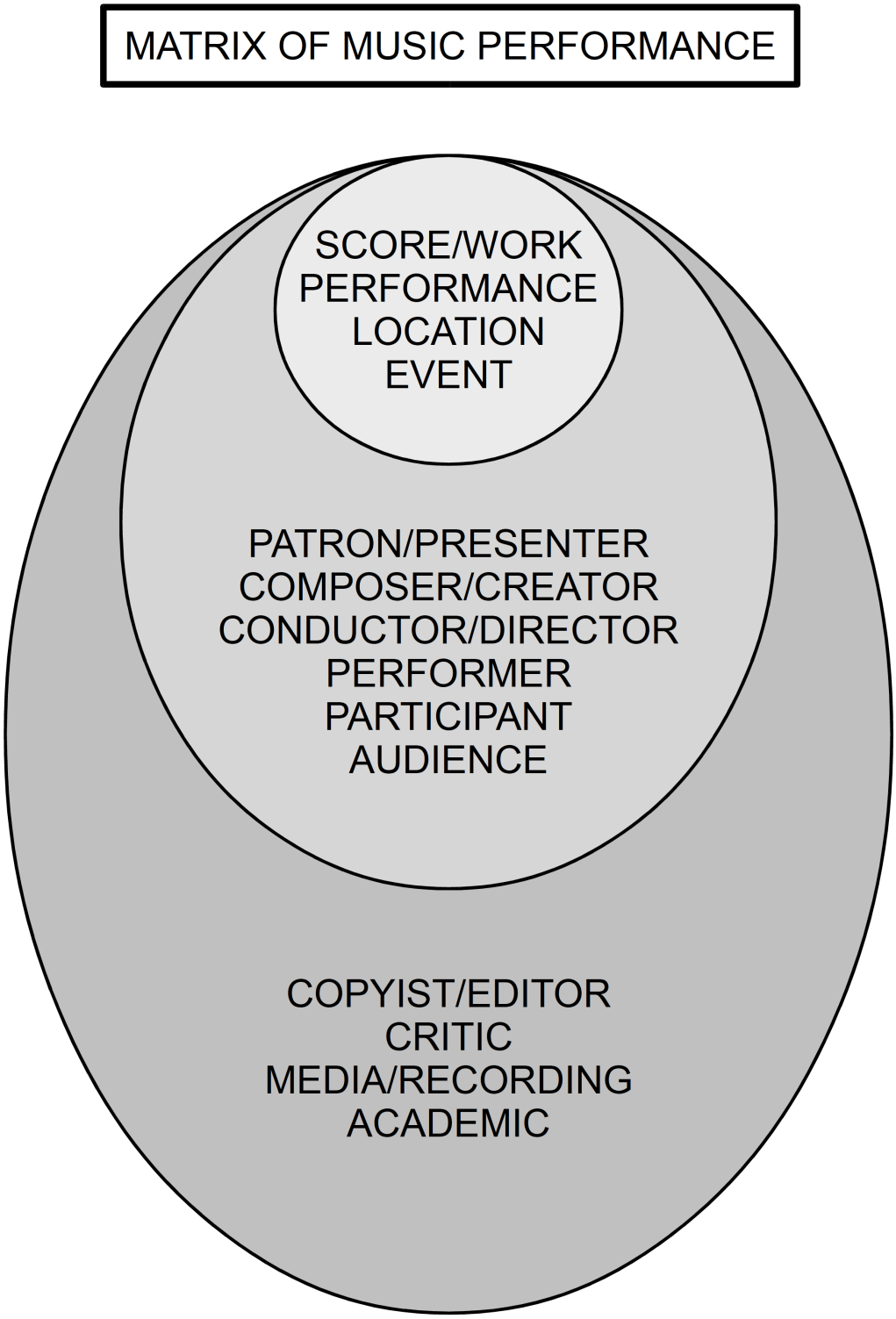
But knowing your place does not mean that you need to stay there forever! Indeed I would encourage the academic to try and get as close as possible, as often as possible to the centrepiece of performance studies: the performance. If you are one of those musicologists who do not attend live performances on a regular basis, perhaps it is time you started. Perhaps in the process you can even strike up some meaningful conversations with the

72 Rink (2004), pp. 40-41.

73 Rink wrote: 'I remain dubious about the musical viability of "one-to-one mappings" between rigorous analytical methodologies and performance, though I do believe that performers continually engage in a kind of analysis as an integral part of building an interpretation. In other words, all performance requires analytical decision of some sort.' Rink (2004), p. 40.

74 Leonard Meyer, *Explaining Music*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973, p. 29.

professional performers, where you focus on listening and asking questions about their views and the processes they go through before arriving on stage. Maybe along the way you can even recommence taking some private lessons yourself, to get reacquainted with the struggles associated with developing technique and practising scores.



Secondly, it will be necessary to reconcile the *linear* tendency of scholarship with the *cyclical* nature of performance. In the section 'Who are performers? What do they do?' I used these terms to describe the career paths of the academic and performer respectively (specifically in the subsection 'On-going professional activities'). I feel that the terms are equally relevant in describing the method of working in these two professions. The next diagram attempts to present the 'Matrix of Music Performance' in the western art-music tradition specifically, including the various subjects (in ovals) and their respective contributions and creations (in rectangles). While the musicologist often plays a very important role in the realization of a performance (the creation of the score), clearly his or her connection to and influence on the performance event is limited.[75]

Thirdly, and probably obvious by this point, musicologists must develop new methods of analysis. I don't wish to say that traditional analytic methods are valueless, or unnecessary, but rather that they are rarely relevant to the art of music performance and to performance reception. In other words, traditional analysis may often 'miss the point' of what is most interesting and important to performers and audiences (and maybe in time to musicologists also!).

> An analysis is verified not when it accounts for a certain percentage of the notes in the score, but when its reader chooses to accept it as a satisfying interpretation of the composition in question.[76]

If what I propose is only interesting to performers (if, that is, performer's analysis marginalizes academics), the academics would do well to abandon the project altogether. This may be somewhat confrontational, but very few performers will take the time to read your analyses anyway – at least not in the near future. That being said, I may venture a guess that if musicologists eventually find new and interesting analytical methods connected with performance, what they write will probably gain interest amongst some intellectually-inclined performers. But for the time being, don't worry about the performers; they are doing just fine on their own![77]

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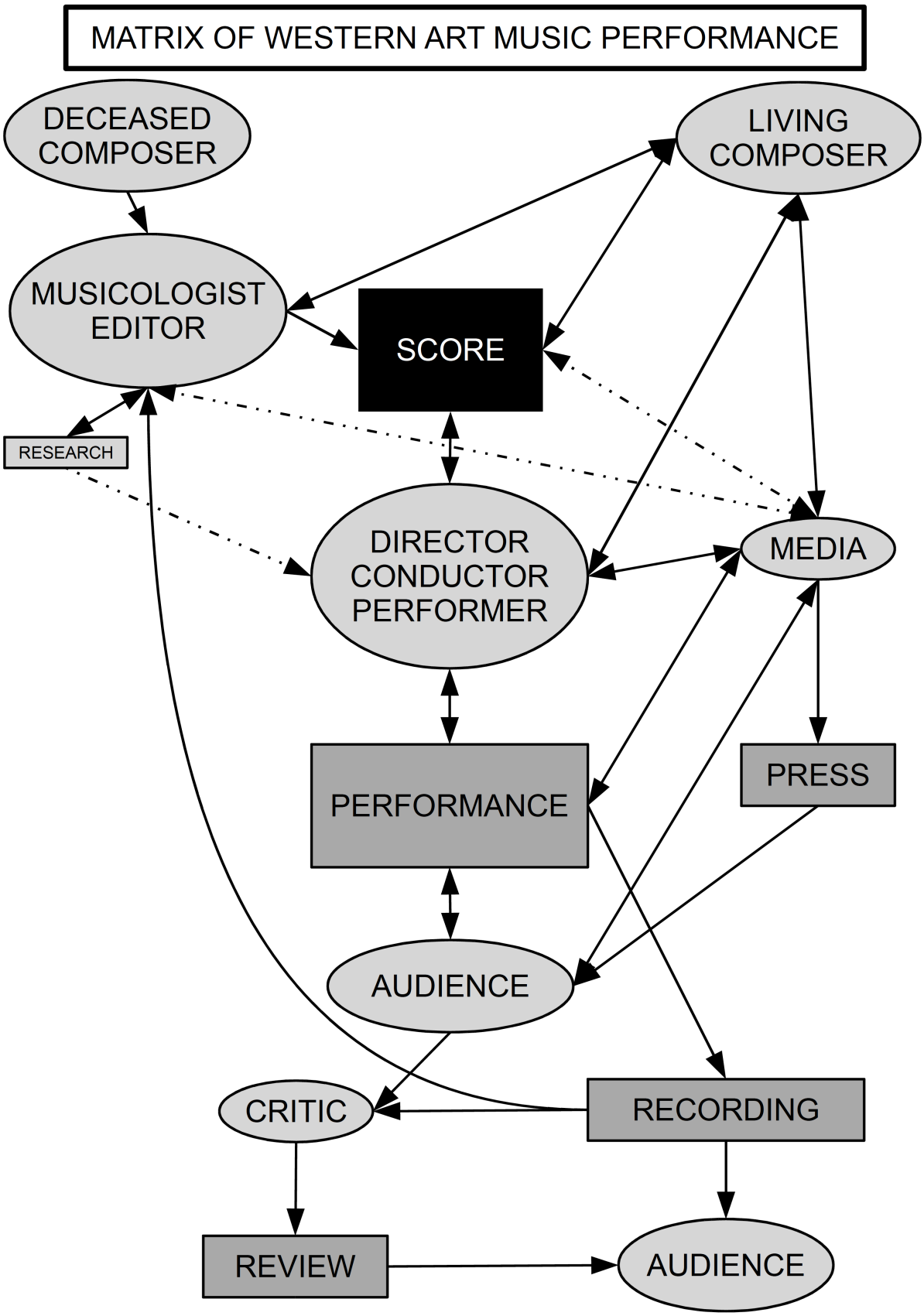
75 This diagram also re-emphasizes the problem with studying recordings: clearly there is an immense process involved between the production of a score and the production of a recording, and it is virtually impossible to glean any information through a 'means by which' approach by considering these two objects alone.

76 Cook (1987), p. 28.

77 Joel Lester has advocated a 'reciprocal discourse' between academics and performers, stating: 'Performers could enter analytical dialogue *as performers* – as artistic/intellectual equals, not as intellectual inferiors who needed to learn from the theorists.' Joel Lester, 'Performance and Analysis: Interaction and Interpretation', in John Rink (ed.), *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 197-216.


MATRIX OF WESTERN ART MUSIC PERFORMANCE
DECEASED COMPOSER
LIVING COMPOSER
MUSICOLOGIST EDITOR
SCORE
RESEARCH
DIRECTOR CONDUCTOR PERFORMER
MEDIA
PERFORMANCE
PRESS
AUDIENCE
CRITIC
RECORDING
REVIEW
AUDIENCE

Guidelines for a performer's analysis

One possible starting point for the future of performer's analysis could be working in connection with an applied-music teacher. An academic could observe a series of lessons with one or two private students, make notes of things he or she doesn't understand or would like to understand better, and then ask the teacher to 'fill the gaps' in a subsequent private conversation. Although they may prefer not to give extended explanations to their students in private lessons, teachers can often explain in detail underlying principles about the technical and musical instruction they provide.

Such a project in connection with a private teacher could also help illuminate the teacher-student relationship. The applied teaching process and the relationship between student and teacher often develop over several years, and demand continual repetition of technical principles. Alongside these come the musical ('interpretive', 'expressive', even 'analytical') preferences of the teacher, which occasionally must find a balance with the student's own aesthetic and technical preferences. If the above project were to be extended to involve a specific student, the scholar could gain insight into both sides of the relationship, and further learn about the acquisition, processing, and adaptation of knowledge. Musical and technical skills are often learned intuitively, even subconsciously, during the course of study with a specific teacher, and ultimately the student decides what his or her personal technical and musical preferences are.

In 'Analysis and (or?) performance' John Rink describes two principal categories of performance-related analysis that currently occupy theorists:

> (1) analysis prior to, and possibly serving as the basis of, a given performance, and
> (2) analysis of the performance itself,

which he describes as *prescriptive* and *descriptive* respectively.[78] However, what is clearly missing from these two categories is the 'analysis of performer' which would add a huge *suggestive* element to the mix.

The potential becomes even greater if we consider that the performer himself engages in three distinct (if not more) types of analysis in connection with the performative act:

> (1) preparatory analysis
> (2) adaptive analysis
> (3) evaluative analysis[79]

78 J. Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) performance' in J. Rink (ed.) *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 37.

79 In *Power Performance for Singers* the authors discuss 'The Performing Cycle', as 'a continuous, in-depth planning process'. These processes (preperformance, performance, and postperformance) are clearly mirrored in my preparatory, adaptive, and evaluative analytical model. See: Emmons and Thomas, 'The Performing Cycle', pp. 35-56.

'Preparatory analysis' is basically getting to grips with the score, and permits time for contemplation as well as experimentation. This book essentially focuses on this process for the classical singer.

'Adaptive analysis' is the most complex and perhaps the most remarkable, as it involves incredibly rapid body-mind-environment associations in dealing with the reception and processing of information and the execution of sound. This type of analysis often takes place in both the earliest and the latest stages of the performance process. In the latter instance the performer must attend to the unique context of performance: acoustic, space, size and type of audience (age, interest). This 'reading a room' is a distinguishing factor of adaptive analysis in performance itself.

'Evaluative analysis' is a reflection on the success or failure of the performance. Many advocates of performance studies stress the process of performance over the product of performance. Though this is arguably more relevant in folk, popular, and other world music cultures (where the line between audience and performer is less defined), it is less justified in western art music. In our 'process' (practice and rehearsal) we are guided by our personal technique, taste, and experience. Our entire process is in the service of the 'product' of performance, which we hope does service to the 'product' of the score from which we started. Moreover, in western art music success in performance is of absolute importance, with process only relevant if it serves the performance in a positive way.

The chart below connects these three types of analysis to the full performance process, from first looking at a score to performing it.

Analysis type	Event or process
adaptive	first read-through (solo)
preparatory	practice
adaptive	first read-through (tutti)
preparatory/adaptive	rehearsal
adaptive	run-through
adaptive	general rehearsal
evaluative	post-performance feedback (tutti/audience)
evaluative	post-performance reflection (solo)

Even if the product is ultimately of greater importance than the process from the purely professional point of view (in that whoever is doing the hiring of professional musicians cares most about the quality of the end result), certainly the process plays an integral role in creating said performance. Moreover, the process should be of primary importance to analysts, if not in what they analyse, at least in how they do it:

> [I]f analysis and performance are to be seen as interlocking modes of musical knowledge, then they should be pursued simultaneously and interactively, not in succession. Or to put it another way, analysis should be seen as a means of posing articulate questions, and not . . . as a source of answers . . . [W]hat matters about analysis is not so much what it represents but what it does, or more precisely what it leads you to do.[80]

For performers, it goes without saying that how we analyse has implications for what we do. It is, after all, completely integral to our continual learning and performing of music. It may be the case that most of our analytical processes are intuitive or occur on a subconscious level, but they can nonetheless be identified and understood, and, as such, constitute a vast area for academic research. If academic analysis is to be useful, it should first set out to serve our needs and purposes as performers. Even if it is not the analyst's desire to assist the performer, I think that an analytical theory based on a fluid exchange between performer, academic, and score would be infinitely more interesting *and* useful than traditional/historical models of the past.[81]

To state some final conclusions, I believe that the best direction in which to take performer's analysis is to outline in no uncertain terms the foundations upon which a specific analysis takes place or upon which an analyst does his or her work.

Position 8:

Performer's analysis in the western art-music tradition should include the following steps:[82]

1. **Provide the same score used by the performer.**
2. **Define the type of performer being studied (amateur, part-time professional, full-time professional).**
3. **Define the specific type of analysis being described (preparatory, adaptive, evaluative).**
4. **Define the specific period of time to which the analysis is to be applied (read-through, practice, run-through, rehearsal, performance, or post-performance).**
5. **Define the context or focus within which the analysis is being presented (structural, technical, sociological, psychological, aesthetic, etc.).**
6. **Define the relevant relationships being referred to (matrices of music).**
7. **Focus on the 'means by which' approach, be simultaneously descriptive and suggestive (rather than prescriptive), and omit any vocabulary which has connotations of value.**

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80 Cook (1999), pp. 248-249.

81 But I also thought a doctoral dissertation on 18th-century cathedral/chapel choir performance practices based on performers' score markings in manuscript editions of Boyce's *Cathedral Music* would be interesting. Luckily I cannot be kicked out of any university as a result of writing this book.

82 The type of analysis I propose is equally useful in the study of popular music – though I would not want to engage in any of this myself. I may like to listen to pop music in the car or accompanying a few drinks in a bar, but I almost never pay attention to it sober. Speaking candidly, while the idea of pop music as a source of sociological study seems very interesting, as a source of musicological research it seems utterly absurd.

Conclusions

One of my greatest problems when studying musicology was seeing the paradoxical disconnect between the academic and the performer. Indeed, many musicologists who embrace and study performance approach the discipline as something rather obscure, perhaps even unnecessary in the greater scheme of their own livelihood and academic interest. Musicologists, of all people, almost all of whom were drawn to their work through a highly personal, if not visceral, love of the way music makes you feel in its hearing and creation! How many musicologists, if given the opportunity, would have chosen the path of performer if their talent, temper, and perhaps intellect had allowed? Perhaps the academics were the most intelligent amongst us in those shared undergraduate courses, but is it possible that this intelligence has cut them off from some exceedingly interesting paths in the study of music? Has musicology distanced the scholars from 'music' as the majority of musicians and the general populace experience it? Has the concept of academic rigour perhaps even distanced musicologists from how they really would experience music themselves, if only they were not afraid to admit it amongst their peers?

In their everyday work and experiences performers and audiences rarely feel marginalized by the academics. This is because, in the grand scheme of things, musicological research in its current state has very little relevance to what we do as performers and listeners. The final point is: musicologists should start taking performers and performance seriously because it could benefit *their* work through a more thorough (or merely sensible) understanding of *their* subject.

There was a time when I flippantly referred to musicologists as failed performers,[83] but of course this is not fair. It may be true that musicologists chose the path they did because their talent and/or temperament would not support a full-time professional career; however, unlike the many others who began to study music and also didn't have what it takes to be professional performers, the musicologists discovered new ways to engage with the thing they love so much.[84] I would only encourage anyone who has the pleasure to have a profession connected with music to remember this love in all we do now.

83 And this habit was certainly common around the time I was kicked out of my doctoral programme in musicology. I may have also been known to refer to certain teachers as failed performers, and certain conductors as failed pianists.

84 One thing can be said with certainty: no one ever pursued musicology for fame and fortune.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – International Phonetic Alphabet

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2005)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

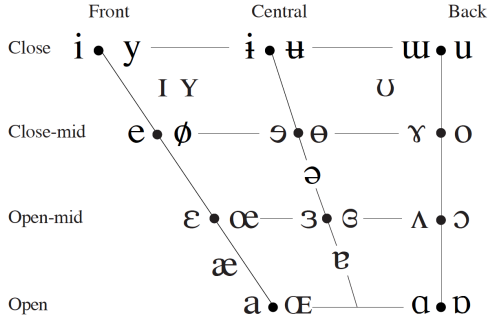
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks		Voiced implosives		Ejectives	
ʘ	Bilabial	ɓ	Bilabial	’	Examples:
|	Dental	ɗ	Dental/alveolar	pʼ	Bilabial
!	(Post)alveolar	ʄ	Palatal	tʼ	Dental/alveolar
ǂ	Palatoalveolar	ɠ	Velar	kʼ	Velar
‖	Alveolar lateral	ʛ	Uvular	sʼ	Alveolar fricative

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

OTHER SYMBOLS

ʍ	Voiceless labial-velar fricative	ɕ ʑ	Alveolo-palatal fricatives
w	Voiced labial-velar approximant	ɺ	Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɥ	Voiced labial-palatal approximant	ʧ	Simultaneous ʃ and x
ʜ	Voiceless epiglottal fricative		
ʢ	Voiced epiglottal fricative		
ʡ	Epiglottal plosive		

Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.

k͡p t͡s

SUPRASEGMENTALS

ˈ	Primary stress	ˌfoʊnəˈtɪʃən
ˌ	Secondary stress	
ː	Long	eː
ˑ	Half-long	eˑ
˘	Extra-short	ĕ
|	Minor (foot) group	
‖	Major (intonation) group	
.	Syllable break	ɹi.ækt
‿	Linking (absence of a break)	

DIACRITICS Diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. n̊ŋ̊

◌̥	Voiceless	n̥ d̥	◌̤	Breathy voiced	b̤ a̤	◌̪	Dental	t̪ d̪
◌̬	Voiced	s̬ t̬	◌̰	Creaky voiced	b̰ a̰	◌̺	Apical	t̺ d̺
◌ʰ	Aspirated	tʰ dʰ	◌̼	Linguolabial	t̼ d̼	◌̻	Laminal	t̻ d̻
◌̹	More rounded	ɔ̹	◌ʷ	Labialized	tʷ dʷ	◌̃	Nasalized	ẽ
◌̜	Less rounded	ɔ̜	◌ʲ	Palatalized	tʲ dʲ	◌ⁿ	Nasal release	dⁿ
◌̟	Advanced	u̟	◌ˠ	Velarized	tˠ dˠ	◌ˡ	Lateral release	dˡ
◌̠	Retracted	e̠	◌ˤ	Pharyngealized	tˤ dˤ	◌̚	No audible release	d̚
◌̈	Centralized	ë	◌̴	Velarized or pharyngealized	ɫ			
◌̽	Mid-centralized	e̽	◌̝	Raised	e̝	(ɹ̝ = voiced alveolar fricative)		
◌̩	Syllabic	n̩	◌̞	Lowered	e̞	(β̞ = voiced bilabial approximant)		
◌̯	Non-syllabic	e̯	◌̘	Advanced Tongue Root	e̘			
◌˞	Rhoticity	ə˞ a˞	◌̙	Retracted Tongue Root	e̙			

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

LEVEL			CONTOUR		
é or	˥	Extra high	ě or	˩˥	Rising
é	˦	High	ê	˥˩	Falling
ē	˧	Mid	ě	˧˥	High rising
è	˨	Low	ě	˨˩	Low rising
ȅ	˩	Extra low	ȅ	˥˩˥	Rising-falling
↓		Downstep	↗		Global rise
↑		Upstep	↘		Global fall

Appendix 2 – Checklist

Checklist		
Preparation		
	Transcribe text (including poetic line-divisions if applicable)	
	Translation (literal)	
	Translation (poetic)	
	Transliteration (pronunciation in IPA)	
Score-marking/Deconstruction		
	Bracket words	
	Mark word stress	
	Insert pronunciation reminders	
	Insert literal translation	
	Melodic analysis	
	Harmonic analysis	
	Vocal analysis	
	Coloratura – Learn the notes	
	Coloratura – Passage-analysis	
	Coloratura – Melodic deconstruction	
	Coloratura – Internal phrasing	
Reconstruction		
	Breath-renewal (B1)	
	Onset-release (B2)	
	Inhalation (B3)	
	Vowels only (V1)	
	The Ventriloquist (C1)	
	Jaw space and consonant-production (C2)	
	Consonant-pairing (C3)	
	Monotone text-recitation (R1)	
	Speaking into phrase (R2)	
	Sing with nose closed (R3)	
	Make resonance choices (R4)	
Final touches		
	Breath bounce (T1)	
	Expanded breath (T2)	
	Buzz the music (T3)	
	Get physical, then stay still (T4)	
	Word-isolation (M1)	
	Subtext (M2)	
	Narrative vs. experience (M3)	

Appendix 3 – Vocal issues cross-referenced with exercises

Under each technical and musical issue I have listed the exercises that can best be employed to address them. The letter-number combinations correspond to the exercises in the book, and the right column specifies each exercise's page number.

TECHNIQUE		Exercise	Page
Posture	T4; C2	B1	63
Breath	B1; B3; T3; R2; B2; R1; T1; T2; T4	B2	69
Onset	B2; B1	B3	72
Legato	V1; T3; B1; B2; C2; T2	V1	76
Intonation	T3; B1; B3	C1	88
Vowel-formation	V1; B1; C1; C2	C2	89
Consonant-formation	C1; C2; B2; B1; R3; C3	C3	90
Resonance	R2; C1; C2; R3; R1; B1; V1; B2; B3; C3; T1; T2; T3; R4	R1	94
		R2	95
		R3	95
		R4	96
		T1	98
MUSICALITY		T2	98
Pulse	B1	T3	99
Rhythm	B1; B2; B3	T4	99
Pitch	B1; T3	M1	102
Diction	B2; B1; C1; C2; V1; C3; R1; R3	M2	102
Expression	M1; M2; M3	M3	103

Appendix 4 – The singer's essential library

Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique*, New York, Schirmer Books, 1996.

> Miller's *The Structure of Singing* is one of the most comprehensive and complete introductions to vocal pedagogy. While often employing a rather sophisticated vocabulary, especially when discussing vocal mechanics, the book is coherently organized and treats each issue of vocal production and pedagogy individually. Miller starts with the basics of technique and progresses to more specific and specialized matters relating to the professional singer and voice teacher. One aspect of Miller's book that is invaluable is the inclusion of several exercises in each chapter that seek to help the singer realize the specific technical points discussed. These exercises are incredibly varied, and many are ideal for inclusion in daily vocal warm-ups. Six appendices supplement the principal text, and each is useful for quick reference relating to various matters from physiology to explanation of the International Phonetic Alphabet symbols.

B. M. Doscher, *The functional unity of the singing voice*, Metuchen, The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1994.

> Similar in organization and approach to Miller's *The Structure of Singing*, Doscher's book approaches the issue of vocal pedagogy more light-heartedly and with slightly less complicated vocabulary. Though not as comprehensive as Miller's book, Doscher's does discuss all of the important issues, and is in some ways a better introductory textbook for the beginning singer.

Shirlee Emmons and Alma Thomas, *Power Performance for Singers: Transcending the Barriers*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.

> As the book's title would suggest, this book is about performance and it is written specifically with the classical singer in mind. The purpose of the book is to assist singers with the professional dimension of their work by presenting tools and developing a system for dealing with the 'Performance Cycle' of preperformance, performance, and postperformance. Emmons and Thomas address almost all issues that professional singers confront on a regular basis during their work, and offer practical advice for developing the 'mental toughness' so necessary for a successful career.

Kenny Werner, *Effortless Mastery: Liberating the Master Musician Within*, New Albany, Jamey Aebersold Jazz, Inc., 1996.

> At the end of the day we should be professional singers because we love music and we love to sing. Werner's book could be seen as the spiritual companion to *Power Performance for Singers*, as it ultimately addresses the same end goal of successful, meaningful, and inspired performance. However, in stark contrast to the development of new skills and mental processes, Werner rather advocates a letting go of the ego-driven mental processes that have developed over years of making and listening to music. By doing this, our enthusiasm for making music will be continually refreshed and our technique can better serve the innate expressivity of the music we perform.