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How do you interpret Heartbreak?: A prototype theory based approach to understanding genre's effect on musical persona

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How do you interpret Heartbreak?: A prototype theory based approach to understanding genre's effect on musical persona

An Honors Thesis
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Degree of Bachelor of Science

By
Madeline McLean
Lewiston ME
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Abstract

When developing a performance of a song, many factors are important to keep in mind. One crucial element is the development of a "vocal protagonist," or persona, which is the projection of the character created through combining text, melody, and accompaniment. This thesis uses how a song relates to others in its genre to inform what persona is projected and how a singer can communicate this persona in performance. I analyze the "heartbroken love song" genre in both opera arias and popular music. This thesis defines genre membership based on Rosch's prototype theory, which defines examples as prototypical or atypical members based on common features determined by analyzing multiple songs (a corpus study). I determine weighted features such as melodic contour, harmonic composition, timber, and tempo that are necessary to be a prototypical member of the genre. The prototypical and atypical nature of "Ach ich fühl's" (*Di Zauberflöte,* Mozart), "Porgi Amor (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mozart), "I Can't Make You Love Me" (Bonnie Raitt), and "All I Ask" (Adele) will inform performance choices such as vocal timbre, body language, and facial expression that help create a persona that reinforces its typicality regarding category membership.

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Introduction

The first time I heard "All I Ask" by Adele, I was drawn to a quality I could not articulate. The song somehow conveyed the emotional turmoil and heartbreak experienced by someone at the end of a relationship, but sounded so different from other songs on the same topic. I was used to heartbroken songs being slower, in a minor mode, and sounding more broken. "All I Ask" felt oddly upbeat with its dense accompaniment texture and mostly major mode chorus. Yet, somehow, the song still conveyed the same heartbroken emotion with an added layer I could not describe. This desire to understand how listeners and performers make sense of songs that have unconventional musical choices with conventionally heartbroken text drew me to explore this idea for my thesis. How does analysis influence performance? How does a performer make sense of the persona of a piece and how does the genre of a song influence the persona of that song?

Persona is the projection of a song's consciousness by a performer. Drawing inspiration from literary theory, the theory was first developed for music in Edward Cone's 1974 book *The Composer's Voice*. He defined the "vocal protagonist" or "vocal persona" as a "character in a kind of mono-dramatic opera, who sings the original (text) as his part" (Cone 1974, 21). The vocal persona is influenced by musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, and dynamics of the melody applied to the text as well as the environment that the accompaniment creates (Cone 1974, 21). The combination of vocal persona and accompaniment (referred to as "instrumental persona") creates the implicit persona which projects the composer's interpretation of the text. This implicit persona is experienced by both the performer, who projects it, and the audience, who interprets it. This theory has been applied to popular music as well in Allan Moore's 2012 book *Song Means: Analyzing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*. Like Cone, Moore

(2012) also makes connections between the interaction of text and musical elements and its influence on the persona. According to Moore, audiences often see the performer in popular music as the persona who is experiencing those emotions. However, he argues that it is more useful to think of the persona as a projection, even if the experiences and emotions described could match the performer. He describes how musical elements can either support a text or create friction (when musical elements do not fit a performer or audience's expectations) which influences the persona of a piece.

But what about genre? How does genre play into interpretation of the persona? In this thesis, genre is defined by textual themes as well as musical styles. Textual themes include songs about love, political commentary, and celebrating a great a night out.[1] The specific textual theme I use to define my genres here is heartbreak. The two stylistic genres are late seventeenth to nineteenth century opera arias and popular music/Top 100's from 1990-2016. The reason for analyzing two genres is that I am interested in identifying crossover between two stylistic genres that deal with a similar theme. Genre is not addressed by either Cone or Moore and I argue that it has value in informing performance choices that will enhance the implied persona of a piece. I analyze opera arias "Ach ich fühl's" from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and "Porgi Amor" from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* as well as popular music songs "I Can't Make You Love Me" by Bonnie Raitt and "All I Ask" by Adele. Performers and audiences have certain expectations based on a genre. Here, I use Moore's concept of friction to describe when musical elements do not fit a performer or audience's expectations based on genre and common texting setting.

Because friction occurs when musical elements and text do not match listener expectations, I use Eleanor Rosch's (1973) prototype theory to determine what particular musical

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[1] The reasoning is discussed more in depth in chapter two, but using both thematic and stylistic parameters helps refine the genre so more cohesive analyses can be made.

elements make up prototypical members of each genre. Prototype theory is a method of categorization that defines members as prototypical or atypical, meaning they are either a conforming example of a category or a non-conforming member. Prototypicality is decided by summation of features, which here will be text and musical parameters. I determine prototypical features for genre by studying a small sample (or corpus) of representative songs in each genre. Corpus studies in music involve analyzing large groups of musical data (Temperley 2013, 1). Prototypical examples contain a certain number of features that provide enough resemblance to other members of the category. This type of membership allows for more flexibility and does not require a best example for each genre. Therefore, pieces that create friction are also atypical category members since they lack many features associated with the heartbroken genre in either opera arias or popular music.

   In prototype theory, features can be weighted differently, meaning some features are more important to have for entry into a category (Rosch 1973). Therefore, I use two levels of features to decide whether a song is prototypical. First, for entry into the genre, the text of each piece must be about heartbreak. After this level, features become specific to the stylistic parameters of each genre (e.g. opera arias or popular music). Based on the corpus, the types of features found for prototypical heartbroken opera arias were melodic contour and embellishments, mode, tempo, and accompaniment texture. Prototypical heartbroken popular music/Top 100's contains features such as melodic contour, harmonic composition, tempo, and instrumental timbre. For both genres, a song is perceived as prototypical if it has at least three of the four stylistically specific features.[2]

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[2] Members of the corpus each contained at least three out of four of these features, making them prototypical examples.

I use a prototype theory approach to determine what makes a song a prototypical member of a genre. I argue that a performer can use the typicality or atypicality of the piece to better understand the overall persona; therefore, recognizing how coherence (prototypical) or friction (atypical) between text and music interacts and so interaction with persona informs performance choices such as vocal timbre and dynamic level, body language, and facial expression. These choices enhance the overall persona of a specific piece and allow the audience to gain an understanding of the song.[3] By doing this type of analysis a performer understands when friction arises in a particular stylistic and thematic genre and its influence on the persona of a particular piece. As a performer, this information would add another level of understanding when preparing songs for a concert and help influence performances choices to enhance this interpretation.

This thesis contains six chapters in total. Chapter one describes past research on persona, performance, and use of prototype theory in music to provide vocabulary and a basis for the framework. Chapter two details the framework and corpus study used to define the prototypical musical features of each genre. These features included melodic contour and embellishments, mode and harmony, slow tempos, and either accompaniment timbre or texture. Chapters three through six are analyses of songs I perform. In chapters three and four, I compare two opera arias. Chapter three analyzes the prototypical aria "Ach ich fühl's" from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and how features create a shocked, hurt, and vulnerable persona. Chapter four describes musical elements that make "Porgi amor" from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* an atypical heartbroken aria and inform the more controlled, but still hurt and vulnerable persona. The next two chapters analyze popular music songs. Chapter five describes how prototypical

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[3] An important distinction to make is that this analysis only analyzes Western music. Genre, features, and musical expectations are culturally dependent and, therefore, the findings in this thesis are therefore only applicable to Western music. There could be overlap with other cultural styles, but for this thesis, I only focus on Western music.

features enhance the resigned, hurt, and vulnerable persona in "I Can't Make You Love Me" while chapter six examines how atypical features create a more guarded, but desperate persona in "All I Ask." Each analysis includes background information on the piece, detailed descriptions of what musical features contribute or detract from a piece's prototypicality, a breakdown of the persona informed by these features, and a recording analysis to examine how a performer enhances a piece's prototypicality or atypicality. There are also recording analyses of all four songs, video analyses of "I Can't Make You Love Me" and "All I Ask" and short descriptions of how this information informs my own performance. Finally, the conclusion not only summarizes findings of analyses, but also contains a detailed reflective portion on how this work has influenced my own performance style and choices.

Chapter 1: Connecting Musical and Textual Relationships to Performance

This next chapter discusses four major areas of research focused on the relationship of music and text and how that influences performance. First will be a discussion of persona and how it is defined and created through textual and musical aspects. Second will be a section on how musical elements like melodic motive and contour are analyzed in relation to text. The third section defines prototype theory and previous applications to music. The final section discusses performance practices and techniques useful in creating the informed persona of a piece.

Personae in Music Analysis

Songs of any type inherently create an environment that invites the audience to listen to the story or moment being described. The relationship between text and music is important to creating this environment. Edward Cone (1974) in his book *The Composer's Voice* describes the result of this synthesis as the "vocal protagonist," or more commonly referred to as the "vocal persona" (58). Cone defines the vocal persona as a "character in a kind of mono-dramatic opera, who sings the original (text) as his part" (Cone 1974, 21). The performer becomes the protagonist of the text and is the mode through which the themes and meaning of the text are conveyed. Cone argues that this relationship is created through the specific tempo, rhythms, and pitch of the melody that a composer applies to the text (Cone 1974, 21).

While the vocal protagonist works as a direct representation of the poetic meaning or character of a song, the accompaniment also plays a key role in creating the environment and subconscious of the protagonist. Cone defines the accompaniment as the instrumental persona, which acts as the direct component of the implicit persona (Cone 1974, 35). The implicit persona projects the "composer's musical intelligence" or the composer's musical interpretation of the

text (Cone 1974, 57). The accompaniment conveys indirectly aspects of the protagonist's subconscious, physical environment, mood, or physical state that the composer wants to bring to the attention of the performer and audience (Cone 1974, 35). The audience also experiences this environment created by the accompaniment, as well as the vocal persona created by the performer, to create their own interpretation of the implicit persona of a piece. It is therefore one goal of the performer to understand the combination of the implied persona and vocal persona and convey this to their audience.

Cone's theory of the vocal protagonist or persona has been adapted for other genres. Allan Moore's 2012 book *Song Means* discusses persona in popular music. Moore describes how musical persona in popular music is often interpreted by audiences as a direct representation of a performer's own emotion and experiences (179). However, Moore (2012) argues that instead of imagining that an "individual" sings to us, a more useful way of analyzing persona in popular music is to "think of the singer as projecting a persona" which could be a "social construction," but also a "projection of the singer's own identity" (179). He describes three levels through which the persona operates: who the performer actually is (for example, Adele's *21* album is all about her breakup), a persona who the performer becomes when they perform (for example, Beyoncé becomes Sasha Fierce on stage), and a protagonist who has no identity outside the song (Moore 2012, 180-182). These three areas either function separately or function together as one overall persona.

Moore (2012) argues that the persona is created not only through the actual lyrics of the track, but also importantly "by means of the melody through which those lyrics are delivered" and "by means of the voice through which the lyrics and melody are articulated" (91). The lyrics and its shaping melody come together to create the persona which Moore says is "inhabited" by a

performer or individual (179). Cone and Moore both agree that the performer brings the energy needed to convey the persona. Unlike Cone, who describes the accompaniment as representing the subconscious of the persona, Moore asserts that the accompaniment in popular music can range in its impact on the persona (191). He acknowledges that the persona operates within the accompaniment or environment and the relationship between the two can either be cohesive or create friction (Moore 2012, 191).

Moore describes the accompaniment or environment as made up of three different elements: accompaniment style and texture, harmonic setting (including modal/tonal vocabulary), as well as formal and narrative structure of the music and text (Moore 2012, 190). The combination of these three elements create an environment that functions in one of four ways: quiescent or setting up expectations for the listener, active or supporting the position of the persona through methods such as word painting, interventionist or amplifying what the text means, or oppositional where it contradicts the text (Moore 2012, 191-192). Moore (2012) also claims that all popular music contributes genre-defining characteristics like screaming in death metal or certain guitar licks in country music, acting as the fifth way of accompaniment interaction (192).[4] Friction occurs when the persona created from the melody and text is not completely supported by the musical environment or accompaniment. Understanding what creates this friction will be the basis of this thesis.

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[4] Moore (2012) also discusses how the persona in popular music, especially in recorded tracks, is also influenced by the other musicians, engineers and producers that influence the song (213). Therefore, the persona is not all the singer's creation. However, while at some level, especially in recording analysis this must also be taken into account, the singer is still the projection of that persona and therefore a useful focal point for analyzing and discussing persona in popular music.

Understanding connections between text and musical elements, such as motives and melodic contour, provides the performer with information needed to understand a persona of a piece. Carl Schachter (1983) uses analysis of motifs to understand how they enhance text. In his essay "Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs," he analyzes motive and text relationships at different hierarchical levels. He illustrates that connections between text and motives can be made at both a surface level ("Der Jungling an Der Quelle,") and a deeper structure level (Schachter describes a motive that is manipulated and used at a deeper structural level to reflect a fleeting moment of remembrance in "Dass Sie Hier Gewesen") (Schacter 1983, 111, 114-115). Schachter argues that parallels between music and text are most apparent when musical dimensions like forms, motives, or structure match textual elements like grammar, syntax, or imagery. These parallels enhance the understanding of a piece for both the performer and listener.

According to Moore (2012), the lyrics are important, but understanding the lyrics through the melodies by which they are associated with provides a more in-depth understanding of the persona (91). He describes four basic types of melodic contour in popular music: generally falling, generally ascending, generally flat, and undulating (Moore 2012, 96). The first two types have common associations. Melodies that are generally falling are the most common melodic contour (as it is easiest to sing). They are often associated with thematically sad songs, as Moore shows in blues melodies and songs such as "All By Myself" by Big Bill Broonzy and "Nobody's Fault by Mine" by Blind Willie Johnson (Moore 2012, 92-96). Generally ascending melodies are less common because of their difficulty to sing and are often associated with aspirational or happy feelings (Moore 2012, 96). This method, though used in this case for popular music, could

also been useful in other Western music genres for providing information about the music/text relationship. By doing a detailed analysis of the relationship between text and musical elements, a performer enhances their understanding of the overall persona. But to further to understand a piece, it must also be understood within its genre.

Prototype Theory and Categorization in Music

Categorization is an inherent part of how humans organize experiences and create connections and understanding from new experiences. For example, listeners recognize a song as hip-hop or country because of categorizing by genre. Eleanor Rosch (1975) defines categorization as being able to provide the maximum amount of information with the least amount of cognitive effort (384). Rosch defines category formation as having two major principles. First, to achieve the least possible cognitive effort while still providing maximum information, members of a category must have similarities with other members as well as differences from those that are not members (Rosch and Mervis 1975, 384). This seems relatively simple, but provides a way to build a rubric for category membership. Second, a category must match the perceived world as closely as possible. For example, dogs and cats make sense grouped together because they are living creatures that have four legs, while grouping a dog and table because they have four legs would make less sense because they share no other attributes. Attributes that define this category must correlate to what is perceived in the world otherwise they are just random groupings of things or concepts.

Categorization is culturally specific. For example, in Zbikowski's 2002 book *Conceptualizing Music,* he uses the concept of verticality in melodic lines as an example of different cultural perceptions and categorization. Western listeners often associate ascending

notes with vertical movement in text, such as ascending to heaven or elevated emotions. He uses

the example of Palestrina's combination of descending scalar melody on the word "deceit"

(descending) in the Credo of *Pope Marcellus Mass* (Zbikowski 2002, 63). This association

though is specific to Western music. In some Asian cultures, such of those of central Java, notes

are perceived as being larger or smaller depending on the range of the note (Zbikowski 2002,

67). The cultural differences in categorization of pitch by a Western listener and Asian listener

would take on different meanings and connotations when applied to text. For this reason, I am

stating that my use of categorization and conclusions made from them are only applicable to

Western music.

Rosch (1973) as well as Rosch and Mervis (1975) developed prototype theory as a theory

of categorization. Prototype theory defines members of a category as prototypical or atypical,

meaning that they are either representative members of a category or non-conforming members.

Classical theories of categorization argue that members fit a necessary and sufficient list of

conditions (Murphy 2002). However, categories are not always easily definable and boundaries

not always clear. To combat this issue, Rosh (1973) uses the definition of category membership

as a summation of all the features or cues that a particular concept has. Features (or cues) are

attributes that are commonly found within a particular category. A well-defined category will

have, what is referred to as, a high cue validity or family resemblance, meaning that the number

of features that make up the members are different enough from other categories (Rosch 1973,

Rosch and Mervis 1975, 384). Therefore, prototypical members are often thought of as the "best

example" of a category, and least similar to members of other categories (Rosch and Mervis

1975). However, these "best examples" often do not exists. The prototypical members instead

have a high amount of features or cues of the category. For examples, "bird" is a category.

Features of the category "bird" include having feathers, being small, having the ability to fly and so on. A prototypical member of the category "bird" would be a robin or a finch, while atypical members would be an ostrich or penguin. The atypical members have some of the features, such as having feathers, but not enough of the features to make them prototypical members.

Therefore, prototype theory assumes graded category membership, meaning prototypical members have a higher amount (but not necessarily all) of the features, while atypical members have less features. To create graded category membership, certain features are weighed more heavily that others, meaning that they are more important. Rosch also differentiates between different types of categories. Basic level categorization finds a median where the category is inclusive enough to encompass all members, while limiting members that are too atypical to function within the category (Rosch 1973). This puts the category at a level or two below the broadest definition. Humans tend to gravitate towards basic level categorization because it provides enough information to define a category, but is not so specific that it needs a vast amount of knowledge to understand the category (Rosch 1973). A "bird" is a basic level category. They belong to larger categories such as animals. Once weighted feature and category levels are defined, prototypical and atypical members can be established in any kind of category, including music.

Prototype theory has been applied to music in many ways, including defining form and genre. Trevor de Clercq (2012) uses prototype theory to analyze form in rock songs. His analysis looks at how structural elements of rock songs (like verses, choruses, and bridges) are defined by musical and textual features or attributes. The prototype theory based approach allows de Clercq to define attributes (for example, melodic phrase structure and rhythmic content for defining verse and chorus roles) and identify a prototypical role of each formal section (de Clercq 2012,

33, 47). From these section role definitions, de Clercq (2012) makes larger inferences about how these sections relate to listeners' understanding of form in rock music (1, 10-11). Three major schemas arose: 12 bar blues, 16 bar SRDC, and 32-bar AABA. From these schemes, de Clercq (2012) shows how section roles can be applied not only to these smaller schemas, but to larger modern song forms (211).

Matthew Brown (2004) and Zbikowski (2002) use prototype theory to analyze voice leading structures and motives respectively. Matthew Brown (2004) uses prototype theory to analyze Debussy's work "L'isle Joyeuse" (151-188). Brown uses Schenkerian analysis to look at deeper voice leading structures and asserts that composers are taught certain conventions (what he defines as prototypes) as shown by this voice leading (Brown 2004). These conventions, such as specific voice leading patterns in Western music become prototypical to the style (Brown 2004, 156). Zbikowski (2002) uses a prototype theory approach to analyze how motives (small, repeated musical ideas) vary throughout a piece. He argues that understanding a piece begins at the level of the motive. He defines it not just as specific intervallic or note combinations, but instead uses rhythm and contour as part of a defining character (Zbikowski 2002, 26). Though not a direct application of the original theory, de Clercq, Brown, and Zbikowski have applied prototype-based analysis successfully in three different ways, confirming the usefulness of this theory in analyzing music. I am looking at common features listeners and performers recognize, such as melodic contour and harmonic composition, to define prototypical members of each genre.

Performance Practice and Interpretation

One can use how prototypical a song is to better understand its placement within a genre; but how is this newfound understanding applied to performance? This knowledge allows for the performer to make choices based on the informed persona of a piece. However, to achieve this, there must be an adequate understanding of the levels of integration a performer does to convey the song to the audience.

Cone believes the performer moves between three major areas when interpreting songs. First is the poetic or the text of the piece that determines who the persona is (Cone 1974, 23). The text or poem can be interpreted on its own level excluding the influence of the music and provide insight into the "character" of a piece. Often this interpretation has differences from the overall song itself. Second area is the vocal, or the melodic line. This is the performer's interpretation of the melodic contour and text together. The performer must be able to handle the melody and make appropriate choices when embellishing and making other stylistic choices. The final area is called the vocal-instrumental which "embeds the line in the total musical texture" (Cone 1974, 23). This combination creates the overall persona of a piece. Cone acknowledges that the interactions of these three areas creates an interpretation that may differ from the original poem, but will still give a meaningful and valid interpretation (Cone 1974, 24). Understanding whether this interaction is prototypical of the genre or not will then help inform a performer determine the presence of friction between the text and musical features.

Every performer brings their own unique interpretation to a piece that stems from their body of experience. Cone (1974) writes that a faithful performance needs a performer to invigorate the vocal persona with their personality (Cone 1974, 62). But how does one take their own experience and convey that to an audience? Wesley Balk (1985) in *Performing Power* offers

an answer to this question by looking both at how performers and audience members perceive

the world. According to Balk (1985), there are three dominant categories of perception: hearing,

sight, and touch/kinesthetic. One of these modes will dominate how an individual receives

information. For example, someone visually oriented will notice the set design of a show while a

kinesthetic person will take in the choreography or the body language of performers. These

modes can also be flipped and explained as projections from the performer to the audience.

Hearing becomes the performer's voice, kinesthetic becomes the performer's body movements,

and sight becomes the performers facial expression[5]. Balk advises that performers understand

their own perceptual and projecting dominance so that other areas can be strengthened. Being

able to project all three levels will allow the performer to communicate with an audience of

varying perceptual dominances. Balk acknowledges that this is a difficult task and there are

times where only one of these areas will be dominant, but the goal should be to project all three.

This method is useful for thinking about communicating with the audience, which is one goal for

performance. Balk's approach provides a way to think about projecting the vocal persona of a

piece by making the performer aware of what they themselves naturally project.

Because this thesis discusses vocal performance specifically, an emphasis will be placed

on Balk's "hearing" mode, specifically vocal timbre and its effect on persona. Kate Heidemann

(2016) develops a method for analyzing timbre in popular music. Her method discusses how

timbre is created through four major components in vocal production: movement of vocal folds,

position of vocal tract, location of sympathetic vibrations, and breath support (Heidemann 2016).

Heidemann (2016) then uses these components to support her theory that timbre is "part of what

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[5] Thinking of these three projecting modes as separate entities is helpful in making the performer aware of their voice, facial expression, and body language. However, all three areas should try to be integrated to create a cohesive persona for each piece in a final.

motivates our emotion and conceptual responses." Moore, who also addresses popular repertoire also makes the connection to timbre and emotion. He stresses the importance of register and sympathetic vibrations as having a large effect on the projected connotation of the lyrics (Moore 2012, 102-103). For example, Moore (2012) describes a higher than normal register as embodying either physical effort or lightheadedness in certain contexts and using "head voice" as being weak or understated (102-103). He says that a summation of all of these choices influence whether a performer is "conforming to the apparent meaning of the lyrics…or subverting them" (Moore 2012, 103). I combine Balk, Moore, and Heidemann's work not only in analytical sections, but also in thinking about my own performance.

Chapter 2: A Framework for Analysis

As previously discussed, de Clercq (2012) uses prototype theory as an analytical tool to define prototypical examples of sections' roles, such as verses and choruses, and how they interact to create form in rock songs. Like de Clercq, I use prototype theory as an analytical tool. However, instead of analyzing form in rock music, I consider how Western listeners could perceive a song as a prototypical or atypical member of a genre. To figure out prototypical examples of genres, I survey both popular music from 1990-2016 and late seventeenth to nineteenth century opera arias to determine features of these categories. I find graded examples in both surveys, meaning I find both prototypical and atypical members. As a reminder, even prototypical examples may not have every single feature and atypical examples may have even less. After determining prototypicality based on presence or absence of features, I relate prototypicality to the informed persona of each piece.

Musical genre can be difficult to define. Genre at its simplest definition is a way of categorizing music by a shared collection of certain parameters (Brackett 2016, 1). Genres are often subjective and, as some argue, arbitrary creations within popular music industry to market and sell music to certain demographics (Brackett 2016). Most often this grouping is based off of stylistic characteristics such as instrument choices, vocal quality, and rhythmic patterns. Songs are grouped into familiar genres such as "pop," "rock," "RnB," and others. However, these types of stylistic genres include a variety of textual themes, from love to political commentary. The persona informed by a pop song about heartbreak would be completely different from a persona informed by a pop song about going out on a Saturday night. Instead I narrow down genres into a manageable size representative of the basic level as defined by Rosch (1975).

To create a more defined basic level type category, I define my genres in two ways. First I restrict songs to a textual theme of "heartbroken love song" (Figure 1). This restriction eliminates the problem discussed earlier of too many varied textual themes when genre is defined only by style. I also further refine my survey into two separate stylistic genres (Figure 1). I analyze songs within both the popular music/top 100's genre (limiting my search to songs released between 1990's-2016) and late seventeenth to nineteenth century opera arias. I include the delineation of "top 100's" for the popular music corpus because some members fit into other genres, like country, but have also been ranked on popular music top 100 lists in either the US or UK. Limiting to a textual theme narrows the variables in a genre to provide a more cohesive and condensed sample of music to analyze. The thematic limitation also allows for some cross stylistic genre analysis. Each stylistic genre has their own set of features to determine prototypicality since stylistically popular music and opera are very different. However, analysis could reveal similar features that provide some commonality to the overarching "heartbroken love song" textual theme or category.
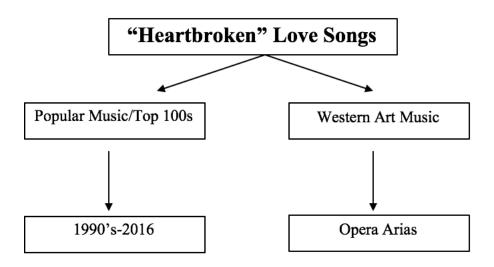
Figure 1. Breakdown of genre formation

Corpus Study Formation

To determine features for both popular music 1990's-2016 and opera aria heartbroken love songs, I study a corpus of each stylistic genre which I created. Musical corpus studies are research often using statistical analysis of "large bodies of naturally occurring musical data" (Temperley 2013, 1). De Clercq (2012) explains how corpus studies are useful tools and can "provide objective answers to some of the questions that a theorist might ask" (de Clercq 2012, 35). My corpus here is on a smaller scale, and so no statistical analyses have been performed.

"Heartbroken" love songs are a subgenre of the larger thematic grouping of love songs. The "heartbroken" designation further differentiates categories and makes features more specific and easier to correlate to a particular persona. This genre is already popular and recognized by other listeners. Online lists of "Song's that will make you cry" and "Five Most Heartbreaking Classical Songs" are easily found with a google search and whole playlists on music streaming sites such as Spotify are entitled "Broken Heart" and "Breakup Songs" (*Breakup Songs* 2016, *Broken Heart* 2016, *Top 55 Sad Songs That Will Make You Cry*). These lists and playlists are the primary sources for which pieces to include in the creation of each corpus because they provide external validation that this thematic genre exists. Other additions to the corpora were made through my own survey of songs that fit the textual themes.

Opera Aria Parameters

For both stylistic genres, the first tier of entry into the category comes from the text. The eight arias below all have text containing themes of heartbreak such as sadness, shock, hurt, and loss (Table 1).

Opera Corpus Study

Aria	Composer	Opera	Character/Gender	Year
"Sposa, son diprezzata"	Germiniana Giacomelli	*La Merope*	Irene/Female	1734
"Oh! quante volte"	Bellini	*I Capuletti ed I Montecchi*	Giuletta/Female	1830
"Il dolce sono"	Donizetti	*Lucia di Lamermoor*	Lucia/Female	1835
"Recitar!...vesti la giubba"	Leoncavallo	*Pagliacci*	Canio/Male	1892
"Ah mio cor"	Handel	*Alcina*	Alcina/Female	1728
"E lucevan le stele"	Puccini	*Tosca*	Mario Cavaradossi/Male	1887
"When I Am Laid in Earth"	Purcell	*Dido and Aeneas*	Dido/Female	1677-1688
"Je crois entendre encore"	Bizet	*Les pêcheurs de perles*	Zurga/Male	1863
"Ach ich fühl's"	Mozart	*Die Zauberflöte*	Pamina/Female	1791
"Porgi amor"	Mozart	*Le Nozze di Figaro*	The Countess/Female	1786

*Sposa, son diprezzata" is most famously used in Vivaldi's *Il Bajet*

Table 1: List of pieces in opera aria corpus. Purple stars indicate analyzed pieces. Red text indicates the atypical member

The pieces above come from a wide range of composers, which to some degree adds a level of variability. Style and conventions changed as opera progressed from Baroque to Classical to Romantic and so on, but most are still rooted deeply in established Western art music conventions. For this reason, I limit the members of the corpus study to arias written during the late seventeenth century to nineteenth century. The features identified through the corpus are musical dimensions (or parameters) like melodic contour and embellishments, mode, tempo, and accompaniment texture. The prototypical examples contained three out of the four musical features I describe below. Requiring three out of four features makes the prototypical examples have a high enough cue validity or family resembles to their genre without requiring a song to be a "best example" or contain all four. This then allows for graded category membership. Arias with less than three features (and with text describing heartbreak) are still members of the heartbroken opera aria genre, but would be considered atypical. These pieces are

mostly sung by female characters, excluding the arias from *Pagliacci, Tosca,* and *Les pêcheurs de perles*. I chose to include mostly female character arias because of the conventional gendered associations in opera, but the three male pieces were included to provide a more rounded view of the genre as a whole.

Overview of Musical Features

The next four sections discuss the prototypicality-defining features in heartbroken opera arias. As seen in the graphic below, text is the strongest weighted feature and, therefore, provides the initial entry into the heartbroken opera aria genre. Prototypical examples contain three of the other four weighted features (again to give the song a strong enough "family resemblance"): melodic contour and embellishments, mode, tempo, and accompaniment texture.

Text:
-Dealing with heartbreak and sadness, regret, or resignation in response to the loss of a lover or partner

Melodic Contour:
-Descending lines mimicking sobs
-Gap/fill schemata
-Coloratura used to mimic hysteria and madness
-Pianto topic to depict sighs

Mode:
-At least beginning in minor mode, more often finishing in same minor mode

Tempo:
-Under 100bpm

Accompaniment Texture:
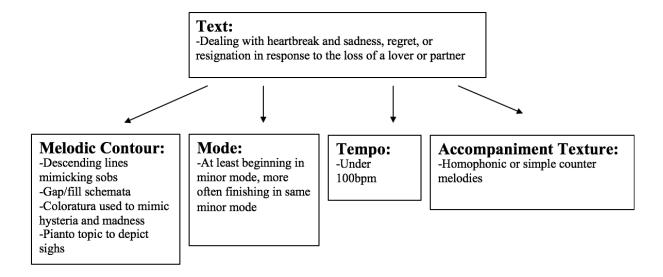-Homophonic or simple counter melodies

Figure 2: Visual representation of the four features for prototypicality

Melodic Contour and Embellishment

In my analyses, three dominant melodic contours and embellishments appear: descending lines, coloratura lines, and leaps to high notes. Within descending lines, composers often use short motives of descending minor seconds, a convention called the piano topic[6] (Monelle 2000). This topic is conventionally associated with sadness, and the physical sigh gesture in particular (Monelle 2000, 66). I find descending lines and piano topics throughout the pieces of the corpus. In "Oh! quante volte," the opening line demonstrates the use of the piano topic in both the sung melody and accompaniment.

Figure 3: "Oh! quante volte" *I Capuletti ed I Montecchi*, **mm. 75-78. Red highlighting piano topic usage**

The repeated descending minor seconds help create the sighing sad, heartbroken feeling of the piece and therefore provide insight into the persona.

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[6] Topics in music are defined in music as "a thesaurus of characteristic figures…subject for musical discourse" (Ratner 1980, 6). Topics are musical ideas that are associated with three major categories: dance styles, musical style (like a military march), or word painting.

Descending contours occur in the corpus without piano topics. For example, in "Sposa son disprezzata," the melody has many larger descending leaps that outline the chord as well as descending lines that end with the pianto topic (Figure 4).

Figure 4: "Sposa son disprezzata" *La Merope,* **mm. 21-23 and mm. 30-31. Purple highlighting phrase with large leaps down and red highlighting pianto used at the end of the phrase.**

Though the *pianto* topic is not present, the general descent is used as a less direct usage of text painting. The text does not describe vertical descent directly, like in Zbikowski's example of the Palestrina Credo, but instead describes emotions like sadness, which are often described as feeling low (Zbikowski 2002, 73).

Coloratura, which are highly embellished lines that display the agility and range of a singer, also appear in many of the pieces, especially in female character arias (Barker 2004, 103). In her 1992 article "The Silencing of Lucia," Mary Ann Smart describes coloratura as representing the extreme and being "free from the confinement of music and of language" (128). Because of this extreme nature, coloratura was often associated with femininity and exclamations of overwhelming emotions, especially in the nineteenth century (Parr 2016, 37, 2009, 140). For example, in "Il dolce sono" from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Lucia's cadenzas and coloratura lines create a frantic, hysterical, and almost unhinged persona.

Smart (1992) even describes the connection between madness and coloratura as "intuitive" and the trills, melismas, and high notes connecting to the "unbearable pitch of

emotion" (Smart 1992, 128). However, Smart also asserts that a connection between coloratura and hysteria is not universal. Even within *Lucia di Lamermoor*, she mentions, Lucia and other characters sing long melismatic lines that have no connection to hysteria. In the context of heartbreak, however, the extreme nature of coloratura, when it extends beyond the norm, could represent hysterical reactions and overwhelming feelings of loss and hurt. Most of the heartbroken arias in this corpus have this convention in subtler ways (such as in "Oh! quante volte"), but play off of the convention that coloratura represents unhinged emotions and overwhelming feelings. The two analyzed pieces, "Ach ich fühl's" and "Porgi amor," are not from the nineteenth century. However, I think the relationship between the extreme nature of coloratura and the connotation of overwhelming emotions could still be applied to these heartbroken pieces, even though the convention is more commonly found in nineteenth century opera.

Mode

In the case of heartbroken opera arias, pieces are conventionally in minor mode. Mode is one of the most defining features of a piece. It decides the types of chords used, notes that can be used in the melody, and has an immense impact on the overall feeling of a piece. Studies have shown that listeners make a connection between happy and major and melancholy and minor (Gagnon and Peretz 2003). Their findings confirm the conventional association between the two modes and emotion (Gagnon and Peretz 2003). The argument could also be made that the conventions of sad or happy modes have merely developed because composers use those keys to represent "sad" or "happy" music. However, in either case, a connection exists between musical mode and a particular mood, which is considered culturally specific.

In the heartbroken aria genre, unsurprisingly, almost every member of the corpus above begins in a minor key. As in other tonal pieces, these pieces solidify minor mode through cadences. For example, the opening phrase in "Sposa son diprezzata" moves form i-V7-i with an authentic cadence at the end, firmly cementing the piece in F minor (Figure 5).

Figure 5: "Sposa son diprezzata" *La Merope*, **19-24**

The piece moves through other key areas related to F minor, but finishes in the original tonic key with another strong authentic cadence in F minor (Figure 6).

Figure 6: "Sposa son disprezatta" *La Merope*, **mm. 49-50**

One member that does not follow this rule with an interesting twist is "Vesti la giubba." This piece from Leoncavallo's opera *Pagliacci* occurs at the moment when his wife reveals that

her lover will show himself after their show and Canio, the main character and leader of the clown troupe, must prepare to go out and make people laugh despite his heartbreak. The piece begins in E minor, but ends in E major (Figure 7). This change of mode still fits the prototype by beginning in a minor mode. The shift to E major however plays an interesting and dramatic role.

Figure 7: "Recitar!...vesti la giubba" *Pagliacci*

The character must go from the heartbreak he is feeling, represented by minor mode, to the happy goofy clown persona he makes his living from, represented by the shift to major mode. The musical shift both parallels and enhances this emotional change and strengthens the minor mode feature. Minor mode will therefore be an important weighted feature and common for prototypical membership.

Tempo

        Tempo, while often considered surface level, greatly impacts the mood of a piece. No members of the corpus study exceed the 100bpm/*moderato* tempo marking. This feature is consistent with empirical findings that people in experiments associated happy adjectives with faster melodies and more melancholy adjectives with slower tempos (Gagnon and Peretz 2003, 4, Balkwill and Thompson 1999, 49).

Accompaniment Texture

        The members of the corpus vary in accompaniment texture, but were mostly characterized by either homophonic movement or simple counter melodies. This simplicity supports the slow tempos by not being overly active.

Dramatic and Historical Contexts

        In my analyses of heartbroken arias "Ach ich fühl's" and "Porgi amor," I consider dramatic and historical contexts of each piece. The dramatic context is particularly important since these pieces are all written for characters in an opera. I therefore consider the character's representation throughout the opera and relationships between the analyzed aria and other arias in the opera. Understanding the piece's place within the plot will help inform the persona that is needed to perform these characters. Historical context is one area that is more hotly debated in analysis. The debate over whether analysts consider historical context or does music analysis exist in a "black box"? (Lochhead 2006). For this thesis, however, I will take into account factors such as time period and cultural context of when the pieces were written. This is also the reason the corpus study was limited to late seventeenth to nineteenth century opera. The

historical context will help inform choices that are appropriate to the style that enhance the persona informed by the dramatic and musical features.

Popular Music Parameters

Similar to the opera arias, being considered a member of the genre first depends upon text referring to heartbreak and emotions associated with losing a loved one/lover or potential loved one/lover. The ten songs below all have text with these thematic elements (Table 2).

Popular Music Corpus Study

Song	Artist	Year
"What Hurts the Most"	Rascal Flatts	2006
"Almost Lover"	A Fine Frenzy	2007
"Say Something"	A Great Big World ft. Christina Aguilera	2014
"Someone Like You"	Adele	2011
"When You're Gone"	Avril Levinge	2007
"Let Her Go"	Passenger	2012
"I Don't Wanna See You with Her"	Maria Mena	2015
"Apologize"	OneRepublic Ft. Timbaland	2007
"Big Girls Cry"	Sia	2015
"Sadness is Taking"	Flora cash	2016
"Goodbye My Lover"	James Blunt	2005
"Tonight I Wanna Cry"	Keith Urban	2007
"I Can't Make You Love Me"	Bonnie Raitt	1991
"All I Ask'	Adele	2016

Table 2: Corpus of popular music 1990s-2016. Purple stars indicate analyzed pieces. Red text indicates atypical member

The features found in this corpus include melodic contour, harmony, tempo and instrumental timbre. Similar to the heartbroken opera arias, a "heartbroken" text acts as the highest weighted feature and decides whether a song is a member of the heartbroken popular music genre (Figure 8). The prototypical members of the corpus contain at least three of the four features. To be classified as prototypical, a song fits at least three of these four weighted features.
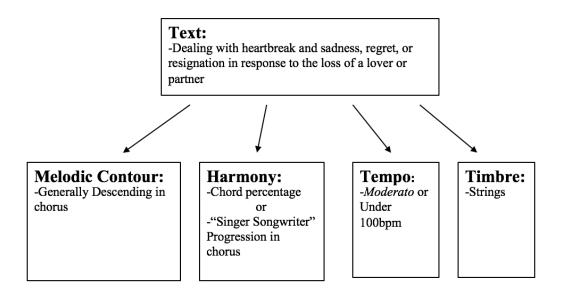
Text:
-Dealing with heartbreak and sadness, regret, or resignation in response to the loss of a lover or partner

Melodic Contour:	Harmony:	Tempo:	Timbre:
-Generally Descending in chorus	-Chord percentage or -"Singer Songwriter" Progression in chorus	-*Moderato* or Under 100bpm	-Strings

Figure 8: Visual representation of features necessary for prototypicality

Melodic Contour

From this corpus study, the most common shape found is generally descending contour in the chorus. As mentioned earlier, Allan Moore (2012) describes how melodic contour in popular music helps inform the persona (96). Generally falling melodies are the most common contour and often associated with sadness (92-96). Generally ascending melodies, however, are associated with aspirational feelings (96). With this understanding of contour and emotions, generally falling/descending melodies make sense as a weighted feature. Specifically, the most common contours include: 1) a leap up and then descent[7] (e.g. "Apologize," "What Hurts the Most," "I Don't Want See You with Her" and "When You're Gone"), 2) a short ascent followed by a longer descending line (e.g. "Big Girls Cry" and "Tonight I Want to Cry") or 3) phrases beginning at the highest note of the phrase and descending (e.g "Let Her Go," "Someone Like

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[7] Otherwise known as the gap-fill schema (Meyer 1989)

You" and "Almost Lover"). These contours are especially common in the chorus, but found in verses as well, albeit with less consistency. For this reason, the chorus must contain at least one of these three examples of generally descending melodic contour to have this weighted feature. Although, I discuss the melodic contour of the verse as well to gain fuller understanding of the persona.

Harmonic Composition

I find two major trends regarding harmonic composition. Either verses have a higher percentage of minor chords than the choruses (30-50% vs. 15-25%) or use the "Singer Songwriter" progression (vi-IV-I-V in major, i-VI-III-VII in minor) in the chorus which gives the piece an unfished feeling due to the tonal ambiguity of the progression (Murphy 2014). The percentage is calculated by taking total number of chord changes in verse or chorus and dividing the number of minor chords that made up those changes by the total. This method allows me to create a standardized way of comparing songs harmonically, even if they do not share a similar chord progression. Minor chords were also chosen because, in Western music, minor scales and chords have been associated with sadness or anger and therefore might be found in Western popular songs with text that deals with those themes (Gagnon and Peretz 2003).

Tempo

The third feature is tempo. Tempos for all members of the corpus did not exceed a *moderato* (100bpm) tempo range. I either referenced the original score when possible or calculated the tempo myself. Western listeners often associate tempo with emotion and connect

sadness to a slow tempo (Gagnon and Peretz 2003, 4). Because of this association, the under 100bmp tempo feature adds to prototypicality of a piece.

Instrumental Timbre

The fourth feature relates to instrumental timbre. In all but two songs ("Someone Like You" and "Big Girls Cry"), strings are heavily featured. The string parts often feature lyrical and generally descending lines similar to contours in the vocal melody. In theory, this timbre supports vulnerability and sadness as expressed in these songs. All these features work together to reinforce the meaning of the text by using features that Western listeners expect in sad songs. Throughout our lives, we are exposed to these connections, and so these features could seem obvious to some. However, a performer bringing attention to and highlighting how these features contribute to a piece's prototypicality makes them more aware and thoughtful in performance choices.

Song History and Context

Similar to the opera pieces, I consider context and history of analyzed songs. This includes information such as song inspiration and writing process. This information is gathered from interviews, artist websites and fan pages, and any books on a songs history. Just as historical context and dramatic context for opera helps inform the persona, understanding the inspiration for and history of the popular songs provides similar information.

Connecting Prototypicality to Persona and Performance Choices

By using the features described above for the stylistic genres, I argue that "Ach ich fühl's" and "I Can't Make You Love Me" are prototypical members and "Porgi amor" and "All I Ask" are atypical. By understanding what features contribute to prototypicality, I am aware when atypical features arise, causing friction with the heartbroken text. I use this relationship between text and musical features to make performance choices that reinforce the overall persona of each piece. These will include choices on vocal timbre, dynamics, phrasing, body language, and facial expression. I do not assert that there is one type of persona that is found in prototypical or atypical songs. Instead, I discuss specific personas of each song and then look at similarities and differences between the prototypical and atypical examples of each stylistic genre.

For both styles, I use recordings by acclaimed opera singers or the original artist (for popular music). This allows me to hear how other performers' vocal timbre and phrasing enhances prototypicality or atypicality of pieces as well as the informed persona. For the popular music songs, I also use video recordings to analyze how their body language and facial expression support prototypicality or atypicality. From these analyses, I can draw upon performer choices and integrate them into my own performances of these four songs.

Chapter 3: Prototypical Opera Aria: Dejection and Hurt in "Ach ich fühl's"

Background

  The Magic Flute (*Die Zauberflöte*) is Mozart's final opera and one of his most famous (Branscombe 1991, 1). It was first produced in 1791 in Vienna with performers from Emanuel Schikaneder's theater company (Branscombe 1991, 145). The opera was influenced by everything from medieval poetry to the French novel *Sethos* (Branscombe 1991, 7-10). It also has strong Free Mason references such as brotherhood and free thought throughout (Branscombe 1991).

  In the beginning, the Three Ladies that serve the Queen of the Night save Prince Tamino from a serpent. They leave to tell the queen but while they are away Papageno the bird catcher appears boasting that he killed the serpent. The Ladies return with a picture of the Queen's daughter, Pamina, with whom Tamino instantly falls in love. The Queen appears and commands Tamino to rescue Pamina from the supposedly evil sorcerer, Sarastro. Papageno agrees to go with Tamino and The Ladies give Tamino the magic flute and Papageno silver bells to protect them on their mission. Monostatos, one of Sarastro's slaves, tries to pursue Pamina, but is chased away by Papageno. Papageno tells Pamina that Tamino, who loves her, is coming to save her. Upon arriving at Sarastro's temple Tamino discovers that the Queen is the evil, not Sarastro. Meanwhile, Monostato and his men chase Papageno and Pamina, but are stopped by the magic bells Papageno received from the Three Ladies. Sarastro then enters and promises to soon set Pamina free from his care. Pamina finally sees Tamino as he is led to the temple where Sarastro tells him he will undergo initiation rites. The Queen of the night appears to her daughter Pamina, telling her she must murder Sarastro. Sarastro then appears to console Pamina. Tamino and Papageno undertake their first trial which is the Trial of Silence to prove their desire to join the

brotherhood and Tamino's worthiness of Pamina's hand. Pamina appears and becomes distraught when he will not speak to her. Tamino continues to complete the initiation rites and eventually completes them with the help of the magic flute. After a final battle against the Queen and Monostatos, Sarastro and his followers prevail and Pamina and Tamino's union is blessed by Sarastro (Branscombe 1991, 45-66).

Pamina is described by scholars like Kristin Brown-Montesano as representing the perfect woman and perfect wife (Brown-Montesano 2007, 108). She is meant to depict a "Brotherhood-friendly femininity"[8] in her choice to stay with Sarastro and Tamino instead of returning to her mother, the Queen (Brown-Montesano 2007, 108). She also represents ideal feminine romantic "true love" with her only goal in the opera being to marry Tamino (Brown-Montesano 2007, 107-108). Her love of Tamino is her sole motivation for her choices in the opera, and so her heartbroken and distraught reaction to his apparent abandonment fits these motivations (Brown-Montesano 2007, 107, 118).

Pamina's solos support this idyllic feminine character and reaction to heartbreak, such as her duet with Papageno "Bei männer, welche Liebe fühlen" on the love and "divinity of marriage" (Brown-Montesano 2007, 109). Brown (2007) describes this duet as capturing the innocence and yearning of Pamina as she gives herself over to her love for Tamino (110). This reinforces her idyllic femininity by establishing her love for and desire to marry him. Pamina's quartet at the end of Act II, "Bald prangt, den Morgen zu verkünden" comes after "Ach ich fühl's" when she contemplates suicide because she believes Tamino has abandoned her. Although the entire piece would not fit the heartbroken opera features, Pamina's section and melodic line has been described as "gasping and sobbing," filled with "tortured leaps" and

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[8] "Brotherhood" refers to both Sarastro and his followers as well as the Free Masons they represent (Brown-Montesano 2007).

"pathetic appoggiaturas all in minor mode" (Brown-Montesano 2007, 118). This similar musical association between heartbreak and musical features in other excerpts sung by Pamina reinforces both the typical character of Pamina and prototypicality of "Ach ich fühl's."

Pamina embodies all the virtues of the "perfect woman" during Mozart's time, in that her sole goal is to marry and submit to the guidance of her male counterparts. This typical characterization is supported by the typicality in "Ach ich fühl's." "Ach ich fühl's" has all four features, and is therefore a prototypical member of the genre, with descending melodic contour (*pianto* topic throughout) and coloratura lines, being almost entirely in a minor mode, a tempo below 100 bpm (as indicated by the *andante* tempo marking), and a simple homophonic accompaniment texture. As previously mentioned, similar features are found in Pamina's others solos as well.

Text Interpretation

Pamina sings "Ach ich fühl's" in Act II scene 4. She finds Tamino, but becomes distraught when he will not speak to her. Unaware that Tamino is performing the Trial of Silence, she assumes he no longer loves her and describes her pain in the aria.

Ach, ich fühl's, es ist verschwunden,	Ah, I know that all is ended
Ewig hin der Liebe Glück!	Gone forever the joy of love
Nimmer kommt ihr Wonnestunde	Never will those hours of beauty
Meinem Herzen mehr zurück!	Come again to fill my heart.
Sieh', Tamino, diese Tränen,	See, Tamino, see my weeping tears,
Fließen, Trauter, dir allein!	That flow for you alone!
Fühlst du nicht der Liebe Sehnen,	Just one word to say you love me,
So wird Ruh' im Tode sein!	Or I'll find rest in Death alone!
(*The Magic Flute* 1980)	

The text describes her feelings of hurt, loss and abandonment. She cries about her flowing tears, how happiness has left her heart, and how she will only find peace in death if he truly does not love her. Due to the textual content, "Ach ich fühl's" fits the first weighted feature and is a member of the "heartbroken" opera aria genre. Musical aspects, such as melodic contour and embellishments, mode, tempo, and accompaniment texture, contribute to one perceiving "Ach ich fühl's" as a prototypical example of the heartbroken opera aria genre, informing a persona that feels an overwhelming amount of shock, hurt, and loss.

Melodic Contour and Embellishments

Melodic contour and embellishments contribute to listeners and performers perceiving "Ach ich fühl's" as prototypical. Dominant contours in "Ach ich fühl's" include descending, *pianto* topic, coloratura lines, and large leaping motives. The opening line "Ach, ich fühl's, es ist verschwunden/Ah, I know that all is ended" descends from D5 to G4 and then leaps up to G5 before returning to D5 (Figure 9, mm. 1-3) (Mozart 1791). The suddenness of her hurt and pain, coupled with the descending line reinforces the prototypical connection of heartbreak and descending lines in the heartbroken opera aria genre.

Figure 9: "Ach ich fühl's" *Die Zauberflöte,* mm. 1-3. Red boxes highlight opening descending phrases

Descending contour is again used as text painting in measures 8-10 (Figure 10). The phrase

begins on and F5 and then outlines a Bb major chord, until the final three notes that create the

pianto topic from Eb4 to D4 (Figure 10, mm. 8-10).

Figure 10: "Ach ich fühl's" *Die Zauberflöte***, mm. 8-10 Red box highlighting descending melody**

The descent is paired with text that describes how her heart will never feel the bliss she felt with

Tamino. I interpret the descending contour outlining a major chord and ending with the *pianto*

topic as representing happiness actually leaving her heart. Major mode, as described previously,

is associated by listeners with happiness (Gagnon and Peretz 2003). Using a major sound when

describing the word happiness makes a powerful connection between text and melodic contour

and, therefore, could be enhanced if a performer's choices highlight this aspect.

The descending contour in the final phrase of the aria highlights Pamina's resignation to

the loss of Tamino and her desire to no longer live. With the words "im Tode sein!" or "rest in

Death alone" the melody quickly ascends from Bb4 to Eb5, lingers on a fermata, before quickly

descending to the leading tone (Figure 11, mm. 38-39). The leading tone then resolves to the

tonic. The descent here plays a double role. It completes the final cadence which provides

finality to the aria, while also reinforcing Pamina's wallowing in her despair and resignation to her fate.
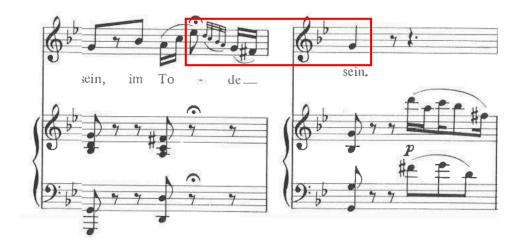

Figure 11: "Ach ich fühl's" *Die Zauberflöte*, **mm. 38-39. Red box highlighting the descending contour in final phrase**

The *pianto* topic is also used for text painting in "Ach ich fühl's." The first example appears in the second half of measure 2 from the Eb5 to D5 (Figure 9). It appears at the end of the first line, paired with the word "verschwunden" which roughly translates to "disappeared." Though it is not a direct pairing with text describing sighing or tears (as was the convention) it still reinforces the loss Pamina feels by mimicking the sound of a physical sigh (Monelle 2000, 66). It is used again however in measure 21-23 in a more conventional text pairing. The text is "diese Tränen, Fließen, Trauter, dir allein!/see my weeping tears." It appears from Bb4 to A4 between measures 21 and 22 and again from Bb4 to A4 between 22 and 23 (Figure 12, mm. 21-23). The topic paired with text describing Pamina's flowing tears is not only a great example of effective word painting, but reinforces the implied heartbroken, resigned, and distraught persona.
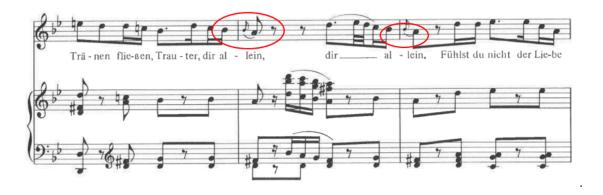
Figure 12: "Ach ich fühl's" *Die Zauberflöte*, **mm. 21-23. Red circles highlighting pianto topic usage.**

Another element of melodic contour in "Ach ich fühls" that contributes to its prototypicality is coloratura to represent hysteria in this context. Coloratura is either a written phrase or embellishments that display the agility and range of a singer. As mentioned in chapter two, coloratura represents the extreme and therefore can take on the connotation of overwhelming or hysterical emotions. Though this is a convention more typically described in nineteenth century opera, I believe similar connections can be made to earlier operas. Since musical conventions develop over time, *Die Zauberflöte* as a late eighteenth century opera could be a predecessor.

Coloratura is also heard in the famous "Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen" sung by the Queen of the Night. The aria occurs in Act I when the Queen gives Pamina the dagger to kill Sarastro (Branscombe 1991). The coloratura in this case, which is much more demanding in both range and length than in "Ach ich fühl's," is often interpreted as confident and full of almost "manic delight" over the Queen's potential victory over Sarastro (Brown-Montesano 2007, 93). Again, this reinforces Smart's (1992) assertion that coloratura does not always imply hysteria, but can in certain contexts (Smart 1992, 128). Both examples of coloratura represent the extreme and use "over the top" embellishments to enhance feelings of high intensity.

In measures 14 and 15, the coloratura melody is exposed with very little accompaniment and uses an octave range from Bb4 to Bb5 (Figure 13). This is also the most rhythmically dense moment in the melody so far. What makes this moment particularly effective is the contrast between measures 14 and 15. Measure 14 is rhythmically denser with almost all 32nd notes and generally ascending while measure 15 is much less rhythmically dense and is generally descending. Measure 14 creates this building of intensity and emotion that is released with the staccato notes of measure 15 (Figure 13).
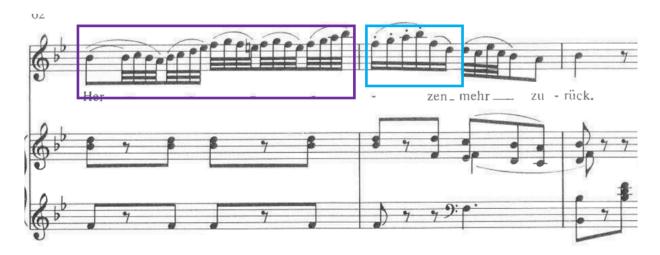

Figure 13: "Ach ich fühl's" ***Die Zauberflöte***, **mm. 14-16. Purple highlights rhythmically dense accent. Blue highlights repeated ascent with 16th notes**

The coloratura also accompanies the fourth repetition of the text "Meinem Herzen mehr zurück!/ Back to my heart!" The repetition of text itself could be seeing as hysterical expression of her overwhelming feelings of hurt and betrayal but, when combined with the coloratura, the moment is strengthened and the features become clearer.

The other type of contour heard is ascending leaps in a way that mimics wailing. The often dissonant leaping motion is referred to as the *saltus durisculus* and is generally followed by a half step resolution (Trochimczyk 2001, 103). This melodic figure is conventionally associated with grief and heartbreak and therefore makes sense in the context of "Ach ich fühl's" as it

would be a convention recognized by Mozart and his audience (like the *pianto*). The first instance of this occurs in measure 6. It is heard with the second iteration of the line "Ewig hin der Liebe Glück!/ Gone forever the joy of love!" The melody leaps from G5 to Bb5 and then falls back to C#5 which resolves up to D5. This momentary minor third reach up to the Bb5 followed by the diminished 7th leap down to the C#5 that resolve to D5 (Figure 14, mm. 5-7). It resembles the high pitched sound of a wailing cry by using the already established *saltus durisculus* convention and reinforces the loss and hurt of the implied persona.

Figure 14: "Ach ich fühl's" *Die Zauberflöte*, **mm. 4-7. Purple box highlighting leaps up to high note in measure 6**

Again this same motive is used with some rhythmic variation to enhance another moment of grief and heartbreak in measures 28-30. The phrase still leaps up from G5 to Bb5 and back down to C#5 with resolution to D5, but instead uses an alternating pattern of quarter and eighth notes (Figure 15, mm. 28-30). The motive is also used again with the second iteration of a line of text: "Fühlst du nicht der Liebe Sehnen/If you don't feel the longing of love." This particular use again represents a cry of pain and sets up the next line that describes how if Tamino truly does not love her, Pamina can only find peace in death.

Figure 15: "Ach ich fühl's" *Die Zauberflöte*, **mm. 27-33. Purple box highlighting similar leap in measures 28-30.**

Mode

Another contributor to prototypicality of "Ach ich füh'ls" is its firm grounding in a minor mode. The piece begins and ends in G minor and starts with a measure of eighth note G minor chords separated by eighth note rests, creating somber and broken mood. The key is then reinforced by a tonic prolongation through measure 3 (Figure 16). This grounds the piece in the key and affirms the sadness and loss Pamina is feeling.
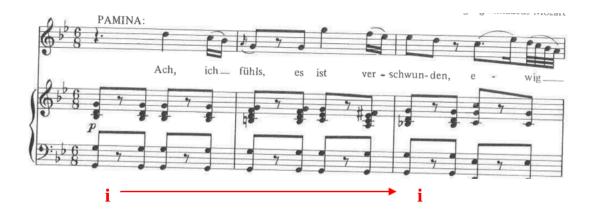
Figure 16: Harmonic analysis of establishment of G minor as tonic mode

The coloratura section in measures 14 and 15 modulates to the relative major of Bb. The audience hears an authentic cadence in Bb major, with a I6/4, V7, then final I chord (Figure 17, mm. 14-15). The modulation to the relative major is not unusual since the mode is so closely related, but might appear out of place in such a melancholy aria.

Figure 17: "Ach ich fühl's" *Die Zauberflöte*, **mm. 14-16. Harmonic analysis of shift to relative major Bb in coloratura section**

However, the piece does not linger here long. Instead it moves back to G minor by measure 20, signaled by a half cadence and dominant prolongation through measure 23 (Figure 18). This prolongation of the dominant coincides with text describing how Pamina no longer

"feels the longing of love" for Tamino. This first part of the statement is repeated twice over the dominant prolongation as if Pamina is having a hard time making this realization herself.

Figure 18: "Ach ich fühl's" ***Die Zauberflöte*, mm. 21-27. Orange box highlights dominant prolongation**

The statement finishes with Pamina stating again that she will only find peace in death with a deceptive cadence from measure 26-27. This unexpected chord makes the statement even more shocking. This is immediately followed by a Bb^7 chord in first inversion that resolved to a C major chord. Because it follows this unexpected cadence, it feels again like a release but, this time, of frustration and sadness that she has been driven to this point. The aria returns to G minor with a first authentic cadence from measures 36-37 followed by another authentic cadence from measures 38 to 39. The finality created by two authentic cadences reinforce the resignation and sadness felt by Pamina.

Tempo

The tempo of "Ach ich fühl's" is instructed as *Andante*, which means not above 100bpm. This slow pace is one of the features of a prototypical member. It contributes to the sadness and loss felt by Pamina by drawing on the convention of slow tempo and melancholy feelings (Balkwill and Thompson 1999, 49).

Accompaniment Texture

The accompaniment texture of "Ach ich fühl's" also adds to the prototypicality of the aria. The texture is mostly homophonic with articulated eighth note chords, creating a slow and dirge-like sound. The simpler texture also allows for the wailing melodies to come through clearly. The listener is not distracted by the accompaniment and therefore focuses on the singer instead. The simpler texture leaves the melody exposed because of the lack of counter-melodies in the accompaniment. This exposure brings out the vulnerability that Pamina feels at this moment and reinforces the shocked, sad, and feeling of loss the persona needs.

Persona and Character

The overall dejected, hurt, momentarily hysterical, and eventually resigned persona is informed by the piece's prototypicality. The melodic contour and embellishments, minor mode, slow tempo, and homophonic accompaniment work coherently with the text to create a prototypical opera aria. This coherence is reinforced by the understanding of the perfect woman that Pamina represents. Her eventual acceptance of male guidance and sole motivation to love Tamino make her the "Brotherhood-friendly" female character as described earlier.

I will perform this piece in a recital setting instead of as part of the opera. When performing arias outside of the context of the full opera, the performer is put in an interesting position in terms of interpretation. Because the audience has not followed the character throughout the plot and has not chosen to suspend their disbelief that the person on stage is actually the character, how do you still portray the themes of the aria and the character while also being conscious of the setting? Especially in the context of this thesis, "Ach ich fühl's" will be one of many songs from a variety of genres. While there will be program notes with the important plot points needed to provide context for the aria, the nuances of seeing onstage relationships form between Pamina and characters such as Sarastro, Queen of the Night, and Tamino will be lost. Though I understand these relationships from my research, my audience may not directly associate me with the character of Pamina. Because of this, I will not only try to embody the persona of Pamina, but also try to communicate emotions felt by that persona, such as hurt, shock and loss. This will allow for not only a performance true to the original character, but also approachable to my entire audience.

For this reason, the recording analysis will not be a staged versions of the aria. The version I have chosen is sung by Kiri Te Kanawa. Te Kanawa is a New Zealand born soprano who had her first big debut in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden in 1971 ("Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation " 2014). She has performed all over the world, including, Salzburg, the Hollywood Bowl, and even the outback of Australia. She is also an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music ("Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation " 2014).

Te Kanawa strategically uses vibrato and dynamics to accentuate certain phrases and enhance the implied persona. Her overall tone is the more nasal rich tone that Hiedemann (2016) describes as an important marker of opera. The two opening phrases have small but essential

crescendos (0:03-0:18) (Te Kanawa 2015). This is especially effective in the second phrase when she starts the G5 very quietly and builds through the note, but concludes with a decrescendo, almost like fading away out of shock. She also emphasizes the *pianto* topic with a very subtle scoop that accentuates the first note of the half step dyads (0:13-0:14). These choices establish the weeping, shocked, and heartbroken persona from the beginning. The next phrase on the repeat of the line "Ewig hin der Liebe Glück!/ Gone forever the joy of love," Kawana stretches the phrase through the high notes and lets her vibrato come forward on the Bb5 (0:33-39). This pushing and pulling effect combined with the heavy vibrato accentuates the weeping quality of the line, making it sound like a release of a sob.

During the coloratura moment, Te Kawana builds volume and intensity in her voice through the ascending 32nd notes and then releases it by getting slightly quieter on the 16th Bb5 (1:25-1:39). The space between each of the 16th notes feel like she is releasing the last bits of her overwhelming emotions. Both of these techniques really bring out attention not only to her vocal skills, but also to prototypical elements of the aria.

Another interesting embellishment choice is Kawana's use of scooping. This technique is especially useful when coupled with the line "Sieh', Tamino/ See, Tamino" (1:47-1:52). The scooping makes the line sound like a sigh of sadness, but also in Kawana's interpretation slightly angry, as though she feels used and deceived. This adds a nice level of dimension to a persona that up until this point has been mostly one dimensional.

Kawana changes her timbre effectively in two distinct places. First is on the repeat of the text "dir allein/you alone" (2:25-2:30). She uses a very small and almost breathy timbre with no vibrato that contrasts from the full and supported tone with vibrato previously heard. This same technique is again used on the repeat of the line "der Liber Sehen/say you love me" (2:25-2:30).

Both these instances provide a moment of vulnerability and wistfulness. It sounds as though the persona is trying to hold to the hope they felt when they thought Tamino loved them. This is then sharply contrasted with the following phrase that ascends to Ab5. She switches back to a supported, powerful timbre with more vibrato (2:48-2:55). The same text (Fühlst du nicht der Liebe Sehnen/If you don't feel the longing of love) is then repeated with a similar timbre but much more softly. Again Kawana uses the contrasting dynamic levels to her advantage to make the line sound as though she is letting out a wail or a cry of sadness. What completes the overall creation of the persona is the final phrase, however, when Kawana holds the highest note with a small *messa di voce* (crescendo and decrescendo on one note) and strategically uses no vibrato till the very last note of the following decent (3:59-4:13). It portrays the resignation and sadness felt by the persona and completes the effect.

These elements from her performance as well as understanding prototypicality of the aria will be useful in creating my own performance. This song is particularly challenging technically to sing; therefore, I will be balancing my own abilities while trying to recreate the persona. One element I will use is strategic use of no vibrato. This was something I found particularly effective in her performance because it highlights moments of textual repetition, such as the line "dir allein/you alone." Singing the repeated lines without vibrato makes her very powerful voice sound small, hurt, and vulnerable, strengthening the implied persona. It will be a useful technique in creating moments of shocked sadness and therefore will be a choice I use as well. I also found her uses of dynamic range powerful. This is a much harder element to do effectively because of the technical skill required, but as shown in her performance it add significantly to the development of the persona. This will be something I will try to develop, especially for places like measure 29, where the high Bb is extremely effective when softer. One aspect from my

analysis that I will bring out in performance is how final the last three phrases of the piece sound. They all are on words "im Tode sein/in Death alone." I will accomplish this by accentuating the last note of each phrase for the first two phrases. In the final cadence, I crescendo a little on the Bb4 with the fermata followed by an even descent to the final Eb4. Combining my understanding of the prototypicality of "Ach ich fühl's" and its strengthening of the overall persona with the techniques and performance choices shown in Te Kanawa's recording and my own analysis, I create a persona that is true to the character and relatable to my audience.

Chapter 4: Atyical Opera Aria: Control and Friction in "Porgi Amor"

Background

Mozart's opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* premiered in Vienna in 1786 and featured a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte (Carter 1987, 33). The opera is based off of a controversial play by Pierra-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (Carter 1987, 34). The story continues Beaumarchais' earlier work *Le Barbier* which tells the story of how Count Almaviva and Rosine meet and get married (Carter 1987, 33-34). The original *Le Nozze di Figaro* was highly political and commented on the social hierarchy and power dynamics of both class and gender (Carter 1987, 34). In order to not offend Emperor Joseph of Vienna, De Ponte cut many of the more scandalous passages, while still including major topics such as hierarchy and power dynamics of masters and servants (Carter 1987, 37).

The opera opens with servants of the Count and Countess (Rosine) Almaviva named Figaro and Susanna preparing for their wedding. Susanna reveals that the Count has tried to seduce her and Figaro declares vengeance on his master. During these preparations Dr. Bartolo, the antagonist and the Countess's guardian from *Le Barbier*, appears with his former house keeper Marcellina, who has a contract stating that Figaro must either repay a debt or marry her. Later alone in her room, Susanna is joined by Cherubino, an adolescent boy in service to the Count. Cherubino declares his love for all women of the manor, but especially the Countess. The two are interrupted by the Count who has come to seduce Susanna again. He then hides when Basilio, the music teacher, enters to tell Susanna about Cherubino's crush on the Countess. The Count is furious and comes out of hiding, only to discover Cherubino has heard the whole affair. He orders Cherubino to enlist in the army immediately as punishment. The Count then chases

him into the great hall, where Figaro is there with the household to praise their master. This forces the Count to reluctantly bless the marriage between Figaro and Susanna.

Act II opens with the Countess mourning her lost love, the now faithless Count. Figaro and Susanna encourage her to set a trap to catch the Count in the act of seducing Susanna. It almost ends in disaster when the Count arrives too early and Cherubino (disguised as a woman to tempt the Count) has to jump out the window with the aid of Susanna and destroys the flowers below the window. The gardener arrives and reports the destroyed flowers to the Count, who immediately becomes suspicious of who was in the Countess' room. Figaro arrives during this interaction to announce the wedding plans. He discovers the plan to trick the Count and, to protect the Countess from his anger, claims he himself destroyed the flowers. The wedding does not begin however because at this moment Marcellina and Bartolo arrive to press their case to the Count, who takes this opportunity to postpone the wedding.

Susanna leads the Count on to continue the plan, but fails when the Count hears her and Figaro conspiring and swears revenge upon Figaro. Marcellina arrives again and demands Figaro repay the debt or marry her. Figaro argues he cannot repay her through marriage because he needs the consent of his parents and he does not know who or where they are. They both then discover that Figaro is actually the long lost son of Marcellina and Bartolo and Marcellina drops her contract. Susanna and Figaro are married, but during the wedding dance, Susanna slips the Count a note sealed with her pin. The note tells the Count that she will meet him that night. Figaro discovers this plan and thinking his new wife is being unfaithful, hides in the place the Count and Susanna have planned to meet to catch her in the act. The Countess and Susanna arrive dressed as each other and Susanna hides. Cherubino, recognizing the disguised Countess, attempts to seduce her, but the Count sends him off, seeing him with the woman he believes is

the real Susanna. Figaro, who has now figured out the plan, also appears and declares his passionate love to the real Susanna, who is dressed as the Countess. Furious, the Count rages at Figaro, but the real Countess reveals herself. The Count realizes his wrongs and begs the Countess to forgive him. After some doubt, the Countess finally forgives him (Carter 1987, 49-74).

Many scholars find the character of the Countess interesting because she does not conform to typical tropes of *opera buffa* women in her interactions with lower class characters (Brown-Montesano 2007). *Opere buffe* rely on stock character types and draws these conventions from other styles of theater such as *commedia dell'arte*, an improvised style that relied heavily on stock character types (Hunter 1991, 89, Pirrotta 1955, 306). Social rank also plays important in deciding how characters interact in the *opera buffa* tradition (Brown-Montesano 2007, 155). The Countess, being the highest socially ranked woman in the opera, should therefore not interact with lower ranked characters, like Figaro and Susanna, in the familiar and equal way that she does (Brown-Montesano 2007, 155). There is also an expectation that if women in *opera buffa* are pitted against each other, like Susanna and the Countess are over the Count, that their relationship will be catty and unkind (Brown-Montesano 2007, 157-158). However, both of these tropes are broken in *Figaro*. The Countess and Susanna are friends despite their different social classes and support each other, even conspiring together to catch the Count and restore his love to the Countess (Brown-Montesano 2007, 157-158). The convention would be to have the Countess be jealous and spiteful to Susannah, but instead the two women find strength in each other.

The Countess also plays an interesting double role as her character from *Le Barbier*. Before marrying the Count, the Countess was Rosine, who escaped marriage to Bartolo through

cleverness and creativity (Brown-Montesano 2007, 165). She is still this smart, quick thinking young woman, who also must now balance this with the societal expectation of being a dutiful wife. Scholars also describe her as the idyllic depiction of virtue (since she is still faithful to the count) and "Porgi amor" in particular portrays her as this distinctly feminine vulnerable victim (Hunter 1997, 9, Ford 2012). Similar connections are made in her other aria "Dove sono i bei momenti." The aria occurs after "Porgi amor," following the creation of her plan with Susanna to catch the Count in the act of seduction. Similar to "Porgi amor," she sings of her desire for the Count to be faithful to her (Brown-Montesano 2007, 173). The aria does not contain expected features, such as minor mode, and is described by scholars as communicating "the Countess's sweetness and dignity" (Brown-Montesano 2007, 174). However, the recitative before "Dove sono" is very active, agitated, and mostly in a minor mode. This sets up what Brown-Montesano (2007) describes as potentially "a good cry (for the Countess) …or flash of noble indignation" (176). This diversion from expectation further enforces the Countesses atypical character and her constant struggle between her younger, more indignant self and societal expectations.

Because of my analysis, I would argue that the Countess, while still the victim of her situation, is not as vulnerable and helpless in this aria as previously described. The text itself, which is detailed below, implies a helpless, dejected, and hurt persona. However, when combined with unexpected features such as major mode, ascending lines, active accompaniment texture and absent coloratura, the persona becomes more guarded and controlled. This control could also be interpreted as representing the Countess' battle with her younger self and social pressures of nobility. The overwhelming feelings of loss and hurt are less apparent than "Ach ich fühl's," but are still present in a much more reserved capacity. The Countess fits many characteristics of the typical abandoned wife/ *éspose abondonnée* (finding herself left by her

once loving husband) (Brown-Montesano 2007, 165). This internal battle with who she once was as well as the atypical choices she makes later in the opera supports the argument that her heartbroken song would also be atypical.

Text Interpretation

      "Porgi amor" is our first introduction to the Countess at the beginning of Act II. The text is short with only four lines, but describes the Countess' sadness over her husband's unfaithfulness.

Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro,	God of love, I now implore thee,
Al mio duolo, a'miei sospir.	Broken-hearted to thee I sigh.
O mi rendi il mio tesoro,	Love that once was mine restore me,
O mi lascia almen morir.	Or in mercy let me die
(*Le Nozze di Figaro* 1983)	

The text shares similarities to that of "Ach ich fühl's." Both Pamina and the Countess are upset at the loss of their love interest and declare that the only way they will react if the love is not restored is to die:

"Ach ich fühl's": "Fühlst du nicht der Liebe Sehnen, So wird Ruh' im Tode sein!"
              "Just one word to say you love me, Or I'll find rest in Death alone!"

"Porgi amor": "O mi rendi il mio Tesoro, O mi lascia almen morir."
              "Love that once was mine restore me, Or in mercy let me die"

Brown-Montesano even mentions that the *donna abbandonata*[9] in "Porgi amor" sounds languid and passive compared to the "quivering tension" of "Ach ich fühl's" (173).

      The text fits; however, "Porgi amor" is an atypical example of the heartbroken opera aria genre because of ascending lines and lack of coloratura, major mode, and rhythmically active accompaniment texture. Instead of a shocked, hurt, and overwhelmed persona like in the

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[9] *Donna abbandonata* is a trope in opera representing the sentiment of "give me love or give me death."

prototypical "Ach ich fühl's," "Porgi amor" conveys the hurt of the Countess through a guarded and controlled persona. This persona is implied because of friction between atypical features and heartbroken and helpless sounding text.

Melodic Contour and Embellishments

Throughout the entire piece, the melodic contour follows the established feature of generally descending melodic contour, but has ascending lines in significant moments. The general descent is one found in prototypical songs, but because of these key moments of ascending lines, I assert that the feature is not strong enough to contribute to the potential prototypicality.

Descending melodic contour appears throughout and often paints the text. The third and fourth phrases in measures 22-25 descend from Eb5 to F4 and accompanies the text "Al mio duolo, a'miei sospir!/ Broken-hearted to thee I sigh.." The coupling of the descending melody and lyrics describing sadness and sighing create a typical convention. Rhythmically, both phrases begin with longer note durations and sixteenth note groupings towards the end of the phrase (Figure 19, mm. 22-25) (Mozart 1786). This creates an interesting tension that seems as though the Countess is trying to stay in control, but the feelings begin to bubble to the surface towards the end of sentence (much like how someone would sound like if they were speaking).

Figure 19: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro*, **mm. 22-25. General descent and rhythmic depiction breakdown of melody**

The descent is seen again in measures 28-30 and 32-33. Here the Countess declares that she needs to either win back the love of her husband the Count, or welcome death: "O mi rendi il mio tesoro, O mi lascia almen morir/ Love that once was mine restore me, Or in mercy let me die." Both phrases descend from F5 to Bflat4 and have similar rhythmic patterns besides one eighth note in measure 25 (Figure 20). Again, the interplay of longer notes at the beginning followed by more active sixteenth note rhythms is used again to create similar tension seen in measures 22-25 (Figure 20).

Figure 20: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro*. **A) General descent from measures 28-30; B) General descent from measures 32-33**

The final phrase of the piece also descends. It not only finishes the piece, but also highlights a key phrase. This is the last time the Countess repeats the phrase "O mi lascia almen morir!/Or in mercy let me die." The melody descends a full octave from Eb5 to Eb4 and outlines an Eb major chord, which is the tonic. There is a finality to this iteration of the text that feels as though the Countess is trying to regain composure and resolve herself to her sadness.

Figure 21: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro*, **mm. 47-49. Red highlighting general descent of final phrase**

Although there are many examples of descending melodic contour, the key moments of ascent destabilize what would be a prototypical feature. The piece begins with two short ascending phrases. The first phrase in measure 18 to19 ascends from Bb4 to Eb5 that resolves D5. The second phase begins again at Bflat4 and ascends to G5, before leaping a major third down to Eflat5 in measures 20 to 21 (Figure 22). This general ascent contradicts the Western convention by being paired with text describing the Countess' heartbreak and desire for her love to be restored.

Figure 22: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro,* **mm. 18-21. Purple highlighting ascending lines**

Ascending contour is used again in measure 33-35 on the line "O mi lascia almen morir/ Or in mercy let me die." The melody ascends in even eighth notes from Bb4 to Ab5 with a fermata on the final Ab5 (Figure 23, mm. 33-35). This is a direct reversal of the convention. The text describes how the Countess would rather die than not have her love restored, but as she states this feeling, the melody ascends to the highest note in the piece instead of descending. A descending contour would reinforce the dejected and depressed text. I interpret this as the persona trying to hide their feelings of hurt by contradicting listener expectations. Dejected text paired with unexpected ascending lines creates friction and tension, implying a persona attempting to control their feelings of hurt.

Figure 23: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro*, **mm. 33-35. Purple highlighting Stepwise**

ascending line

Unlike certain prototypical members of the corpus study, "Porgi Amor" does not have typical excessive coloratura lines. The extreme and excessive sound of coloratura lines would detract from the guarded and controlled nature of the persona. The Countess, though hurt and dejected like Pamina in "Ach ich fühl's," must stay virtuous and guarded as her social rank requires and therefore cannot give into overwhelming emotions.

Mode

One of the strongest atypical features in "Porgi amor" is that the aria is in a major mode. In fact, most of the piece is in Eflat major, except for a short a modulation to the dominant Bb major. The majority of the cadences are either half cadences or a type of authentic cadence. The first sung two phrases in measures 18-21 establish this key with a strong authentic cadence in measure 21 (Figure 24).

Figure 24: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro.* **Key establishment in measures 18-21**

As shown in the corpus study, every member at least began in minor mode. The major mode lacks this feature and therefore contributes to the atypicality. The atypicality both informs and enhances the more guarded and controlled overall persona by not drawing on the minor mode association with sadness. I interpret the major mode as one of the significant contributors to the guarded persona this piece exudes. It acts as the Countess' virtuous and controlled exterior that she must present as a woman of her social status, even in times of great personal sorrow.

Most of the cadences in "Porgi amor" are either half or authentic cadences in either the tonic (Eb major) or the dominant (Bb major). There are however two important deceptive cadences though that occur towards the end of the aria that break up this cycle. They do not modulate the aria to a minor mode (which would make the case for prototypicality), but instead are used to highlight specific moments of vulnerability.

The first is between measures 39 and 40. The cadence moves from the V (Bb) to the vi (C minor) at the end of the phrase "O mi rendi il mio tesoro/Either give me back my darling" (Figure 25, mm. 39-40). The second cadence actually uses a vii°⁷/vi which resolves to vi in measures 42 to 43. This second deceptive cadence occurs at the end of the phrase "O mi lascia men morir/Or in mercy let me die." The combination of both deceptive cadences make the performer and listener hear the minor sound, which as discussed earlier Western listeners associate with sadness (Gagnon and Peretz 2003). These two moments break down the guarded persona for a moment and allow the audience to see the depth of the Countess' heartbreak. However, it is quickly replaced by major chords and the guarded, controlled person returns.

Figure 25: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro***. A-deceptive cadence at measures 39-40. B-deceptive cadence at measures 42-43**

Tempo

The only feature that could make "Porgi amor" prototypical is the tempo. The tempo marking is Larghetto which fits well under the 100bpm range. The tempo is one feature that roots the piece in the heartbroken opera aria genre. It was one of the most common features found in the corpus study. However, as will be discussed next, the accompaniment texture destabilizes this tempo slightly.

Accompaniment Texture

The accompaniment texture of "Porgi amor" is much more active than the prototypical members of the corpus study and therefore contributes to the piece's atypicality. Instead of mostly homophonic slow chords, the texture consists of more active and independent lines (Figure 26). The rhythmic texture is mostly sixteenth notes, creating a feeling of movement and drive as seen in measures 18 and 19 (Figure 26). The steadiness and density in the texture reinforces the controlled, guarded persona.

Figure 26: "Porgi amor" *Le Nozze di Figaro***. A) Accompaniment texture at mm. 18-19 B) Accompaniment texture at mm. 31-32**

Persona and Character

As discussed earlier, the Countess is not a typical abandoned wife or *opera buffa* woman. The Countess is dejected and heartbroken because of the unfaithfulness of the Count, but she does not reveal the depth of her pain by singing prototypical heartbroken opera arias. Her actions throughout the rest of the opera, such as working closely with low class characters like Figaro and being civil with her apparent rival Susanna, also reinforce the occurrence of the atypical heartbroken aria. Her other arias, such as "Dove sono," also lack features of a typical heartbroken opera aria and therefore also support the atypicality of "Porgi amor." The Countess defies the traditional gender roles in *opera buffa*, which is a style that relies on tropes and stereotypes (Hunter 1991, 89, Pirrotta 1955, 306). The atypicality of her character strengthens performers' and audience's perception of musical atypicality. This friction between text and atypical features then informs a persona that is hurt, but guarded and controlled, instead of a more common overwhelmed and dejected persona. The challenge in performing this aria stems from displaying hurt and loss while keeping the guarded and controlled nature of the Countess throughout the piece.

Similar to "Ach ich fühl's," I use a concert version recording sung by the Bulgarian soprano Sonya Yoncheva. Yoncheva has performed on many of the world's biggest opera stages such as the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, and Opéra de Paris and has been praised for her portrayals of iconic roles ("Sonya Yoncheva" 2017). The recording of "Porgi amor" was released by Beutsche Grammophons, and nominated for the 2017 GRAMMY Award for "Best Opera Recording" ("Sonya Yoncheva" 2017, Yoncheva 2016).

Overall, Yoncheva uses a rich and warm tone with vibrato throughout (as is standard in opera), but chooses certain notes to either be straight toned or builds to vibrato to accentuate certain phrases. For example, on the word "ristoro" she begins the word with no vibrato by on "-sto" lets the vibrato come through for the rest of the phrase (1:31-1:40) (Yoncheva 2016). This creates a moment of tension that sounds somewhat sob-like. The melody itself does not imply this feature as it is an ascending phrase and contains no *pianto* or large leaps like in "Ach ich fühl's." However, the choice is deliberate and subtle enough to convey the Countess' sadness while still making her sound guarded.

Yoncheva also uses a shift from vibrato tone to straight tone combined with a crescendo on the first descending "O mi rendi il mio tesoro" (1:55-2:06). She begins with an almost breathy quality on the held dotted quarter note, which quickly crescendos and gains more vibrato to continue the phrase. Again we feel this push and pull, but this seems like she has been holding back these emotions until this moment where she finally recognizes them. This same phasing is used on the next phrase "O mi lascia almen morir" (2:13-2:22). A similar effect is achieved as though she is finally saying aloud to herself that she would take death if she cannot have the Count back.

In the long ascending line to the high Ab, Yoncheva choses an interesting interpretation. She takes the first four notes to accelerate slightly and increasing in intensity, volume, and vibrato as she ascends (2:13-2:22). This ascending line is atypical due to its pairing with text describing how the Countess would rather die if the Count will not return to her. Yoncheva's choice to push the tempo just slightly at this moment makes it feel more desperate, but not as dramatic as the coloratura line in "Ach ich fühl's." It adds vulnerability without being overly dramatic and still maintaining the guarded and controlled persona.

Yoncheva accentuates the final cadence in Eb to finish the piece (3:11-3:19). She uses minimal vibrato and sings the line very softly. This timbre makes the moment sound dejected even with the major chords accompanying the melody. The choice helps bring out the more vulnerable side of the Countess. This, followed by the more powerful coda, seems as though she regains control of her situation (3:21-3:38).

When I perform this piece, I play with the placement of straight vs. vibrato tone. I find Yoncheva's interpretation and usage powerful; therefore, I will make some similar choices. One moment in particular will be the slight acceleration to the high Ab. I thought this added an interesting moment of vulnerability that had not been heard so far in the aria. I also will focus on stretching long phrases to make them sound like sighs, but not sobs like in "Ach ich fühl's." For example, measures 22-25 is a chance to make changes in dynamic levels and subtly scoop into certain notes to bring out the sighing quality. For body language, I will use a neutral, but strong posture to help project the stoic persona the musical features inform. An active body language would not support the atypicality of the piece. For facial expressions, I will focus on a wistful and forlorn projection instead of true distress. Although the audience hears her describe pain over the unfaithfulness of the Count, the persona has been dealing with this pain for some time. Therefore, instead of the more shocked and hurt expression, as heard in "Ach ich fühl's," I will attempt to convey a wearier sadness.

The divergence from musical conventions combined with the Countess' atypical character provides insight into the implied guarded persona in "Porgi amor." Though the text is explicit about the Countess' hurt and dejected feelings, the atypical features create friction and inform a controlled persona.

Chapter 5: Prototypical Pop Music Song: Vulnerability in "I Can't Make You Love Me"

Background

The song "I Can't Make You Love Me," performed by Bonnie Raitt, gained attention and popularity, reaching number 18 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 and number 6 on the *Billboard* Adult Contemporary chart (Whitburn 2002). " I Can't Make you Love Me" also received critical acclaim gaining a spot on the Rolling Stone list of "The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time" and being inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2017 ("Rolling Stones Greatest Songs of All TIme " 2011, Kreps 2016). Because of this popularity and recognition, the song has been covered by many varied artists, including George Michael in 1998, Boyz to Men in 2009 and Adele in 2011.

"I Can't Make You Love Me" describes the end of a one sided relationship and the heartbreak of letting a partner go who is no longer in love with the persona. It was written by Mike Reid and Allen Shamblin who were mostly known for their success in the country music genre. After about six months of tweaking and rewriting, they gave the song to Bonnie Raitt and it was recorded for her 1991 album "Luck of the Draw" (Creswell 2005). The inspiration for the song came from an article Reid read about an arrest of a man who had tried to shoot his girlfriend's car when drunk. Later in court, the man said that the one thing he learned was "that you can't make a woman love you if she don't" (Creswell 2005, 126).

Text Interpretation

The text describes the final night of a persona that feels resigned and heartbroken since the love they feel is not reciprocated. The first verse describes the persona and their partner

getting ready for bed. The imagery used is of lights and bed sheets being turned down, before they lay down one last time together. The persona also asks that their partner to "Tell me no lies/Just hold me close, don't patronize/Don't patronize me." The chorus begins with the title lines "'Cause I can't make you love me if you don't." The persona then says how they will love their partner for one last time, knowing full well that their love will not be reciprocated. The chorus is full of sadness (e.g. "You can't make your heart feel something it won't) with a little bit of frustration ("…and I'll feel the power, but you won't"), but overwhelmingly the feeling conveyed is dejection and resignation. The second verse continues the themes of the first verse in asking for their partner to give them one more night where they can pretend that their love is reciprocated. They say that once morning comes they will "do what's right" and "give up this fight"; that they have been fighting in trying to make the other person feel the way they do. There is no bridge in "I Can't Make You Love Me." Instead there is a final chorus that repeats the same sentiments as before, but seems more poignant and heartbroken in this second iteration.

The text describes heartbreak and its associated emotions, which is the first weighted feature, and therefore makes "I Can't Make You Love Me" a member of the heartbroken popular music/top 100 songs (1990-2016). "I Can't Make You Love Me" is a prototypical example of the genre because of its descending melodic contour, harmonic composition, and slow tempo. This informs a dejected, resigned, and hurt overall persona.

Melodic Contour

The general melodic contour in both chorus and verses is descent and reinforces the prototypicality of the song. It also informs the sad, dejected, and in this case resigned, overall persona needed to portray the song. The range of "I Can't Make You Love Me" goes from an

F3-Bb4, which is a challenge for me to sing due to the low F3. The opening text "Turn down the lights, turn down the bed," falls from a G4 to G3 (Figure 27, mm. 9-10) (Reid and Shamblin 1991). This is then followed by a short ascending phrase from G3-G4 which then descends back to D4 (Figure, 27, mm. 11-12). This overall descending shape reinforces the imagery in the text of turning down the lights and bed sheets. As mentioned earlier, Moore (2012) found that descending lines in Western popular music were not only the most common type of melodic contour, but also often associated with sadness or hurt (Moore 2012, 92-96). The first two phrases are not inherently sad images and, in fact, could be used in a different song as a precursor to a loving and intimate moment. However, pairing this text with descent not only makes for nice word painting (lights and blankets going down), but also contributes to setting a tone for this resigned, dejected, wistful and heartbroken persona.

Although most of the melodic contour in the verse is descending, there are two instances of ascent that cause some issues with interpretation. The overall structure of the two phrases is known as the SRDC, which stands for statement, restatement, departure, and conclusion (this can be seen in mm. 9-12 and mm. 13-16) (de Clercq 2012, 167). De Clercq (2012) explains that there is no specified measure length that that defines the SRDC, which makes it useful for analyzing the varied nature of popular music phrases (168).[10] Each element of this SRDC is only one measure long, which is unusual, but possible in this schema. This helps explain the conflicting features heard in the first ascending phrase. It is a short phrase that ascends from G3 to G4 and is associated with the text "turn down these voices" (Figure, 27, mm 11-12). This combination goes against the convention set by the first two lines which describe lights and bed sheets being turned down with descending melodic contour. In this case, it could be seen as a form functional choice

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[10] The original framework for SRDC comes from Walter Everett's works *Beatles as Musicians: Revolver through the Anthology* (1999) and *Beatles as Musicians: The Quarry Men through the Rubber Soul* (2001)

by the songwriters to keep the SRDC phrase structure. However, I choose to interpret it as highlighting the more abstract text ("turning down" voices). The change in melodic contour brings variance, and, although it contradicts the typical features of the genre, is short enough not to discount a majority descending contour. The same melodic phrase is used with the line "Just hold me close" (Figure 27, m.11 and m. 15). However, in measure 15, the phrase makes more sense textually and becomes a moment of hope and vulnerability. Moore (2012) describes ascending lines as conventionally associated with hope or aspiration (96). The pairing of "just hold me close" and the ascending line in measure 15 creates a small moment of hope that is quickly pushed aside in the following phrase.

The descending contour at the end of verse one influences how one interprets the text. When read out of context, the text "Don't patronize, don't patronize me" sounds frustrated and angry. However, when paired with descending melodic contour and the lowest note in the song, the text sounds dejected and resigned (Figure 27, mm. 17-18). The descending line falls away, mimicking a slowly released sigh. This pairing enhances the hurt and resignation felt by the persona, and softens the anger that could be interpreted from the text itself.
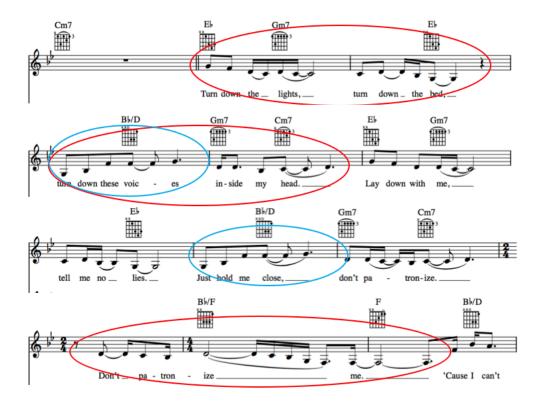
Figure 27. Bonnie Raitt, "I Can't Make You Love Me," mm. 8-19. First verse with general descending circled in red and moments of ascension circled in blue.

The chorus is almost exclusively descending lines that all begin at or leap up to Bb4 (Figure 28, mm. 19-30). This section in particular is what makes the song prototypical since members of the corpus study almost all included a descending pattern in the chorus. Almost all text heard with descending lines are about giving up, trying to make the other person love them, or how they cannot force them to feel differently than what they do. The choice to make the leap to the Bb4, which is the highest note in the song, makes this moment the most emotionally charged in the song at this point. The Bb4 is so much higher than any of the other pitches and therefore brings intensity to this phrase. It then clashes with the resignation and vulnerability of the lower phrases in the verses. Every time the melody reaches that high note, I interpret it as a release of emotion and the descent as tears following that release (Figure 28, m. 27). Descending lines are very common in Western art music and often associated with motives such as the *pianto*

topic, which symbolizes tears, sighing, and sadness (Monelle 2000). Although popular music has

many stylistic differences from opera, the convention of descent and melancholy still permeates

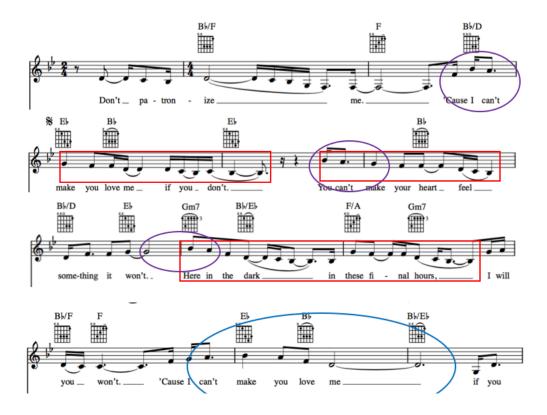Western music and therefore similar musical and text relationships appear in both styles.

Figure 28. Bonnie Raitt, "I Can't Make You Love Me," mm. 17-29. Red: Descending lines from Bb4. Purple: Leaps to Bb4. Blue: Final "I can't make you love me"

The intensity is finally diminished at the end of the chorus. The line "Cause I can't make

you love me if you don't" shares a similar melodic contour to its first iteration at the beginning

of the chorus, but is broken up rhythmically into two distinct sections. Up until this moment, the

rhythmic density has been mostly dotted eighth notes, sixteenth notes, with the longest duration a

quarter note. The final phrase in the chorus is stretched to emphasize the title line of the song,

creating one more moment of release on the high Bb (Figure 28, mm. 27-29).

One other small melodic phrase provides some interesting insight into the persona. The end of the second verse again uses the same poetic device of repeating the final phrase "and I'll give us this fight." Unlike the descending melody at the end of the first verse, the melody here goes up to the Bb4 and then descends back to the F4 (Figure 29, mm. 44-46) By using the high Bb4, this point creates a similar intensity as heard in the chorus. This change of melodic contour and range also seems like a final release of emotion and desperation. It occurs on the repeating of the phrase "And I will give up this fight." The textual repetitions and the change in melodic contour (ascending up to Bb4 and returning to F4) reinforces this momentary release of emotion and desperation. All of these moments in the melody reinforce the heartbroken textual themes in this piece and contribute to "I Can't Make You Love Me" being a prototypical member of the category.
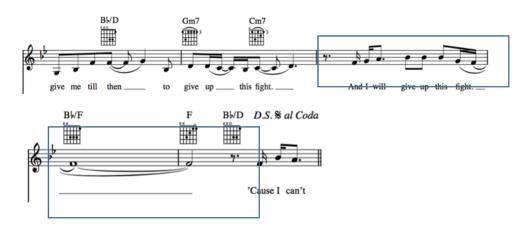

Figure 29 "I Can't Make You Love Me" mm. 41-46. Blue box showing melodic difference at end of second verse

Harmony

Harmonically, "I Can't Make You Love Me" follows the prototypical features established for harmony. The percentage of minor chords in the verse is about 50% with 6 out of the 13 total chords being minor. The chorus only has around 20% minor chords with 4 out of the 20 chords being minor. The harmonic rhythm though stays relatively the same between the verse and chorus. The chorus contains more major chords. The theme of the chorus is the singer's own feelings, describing how they have no control over the situation but will give everything in this last moment even though their feelings will not be reciprocated.

> Cause I can't make you love me if you don't
> You can't make your heart feel something it won't
> Here in the dark, in these final hours
> I will lay down my heart and I'll feel the power
> But you won't, no you won't
> 'Cause I can't make you love me, if you don't

The pairing of a more major sound with these words of resignation and hurt almost contradict the feelings expressed. Because of the descending melodic contour and key moments where minor chords highlight certain phrases, this pairing brings back conventional association of sadness with minor modes in Western music (Balkwill and Thompson 1999). For example, at the moment when the words "Here in the dark" are sung, the progression begins with Gm7 and ends on a Bb/Eb. This is the first time in the whole piece that a phrase begins on Gm7. Even in verses where the chord progression is overall more minor, the phrases almost always begin with a major chord. This strategic placement of the minor chord brings the persona away from a more wistful, longing sadness to a harsher realizing that this will be the last moments they will have with this person.
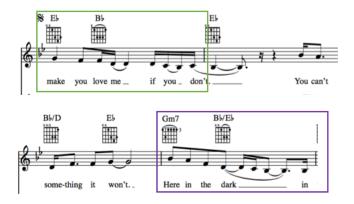
Figure 30. Bonnie Raitt, "I Can't Make You Love Me," mm. 20-25. Showing the harmonic difference between beginnings of two chorus phases

Tempo

When "I Can't Make You Love Me" was first written, it originally was meant to be an upbeat bluegrass piece. However, both Reid and Shamblin noticed that once the song was slowed down significantly to a much slower tempo of about 70bpm, the song suddenly became much more powerful (Creswell 2005). Tempo is another interesting component to the prototypicality of the piece. It falls within the below 100bpm/*moderato* tempo marking, making this weighted feature count. Slow tempos, as stated earlier, are often associated with melancholy emotions (Balkwill and Thompson 1999). It would then make sense that a piece about heartbreak would fit this feature. The tempo also allows for words to be processed and descending melodies to feel more wistful and sad.

Accompaniment Timbre

The one feature that is not met by "I Can't Make You Love Me" is the timbre choice to use strings. This was a feature found in almost every member of the corpus study and therefore was included in the definition of prototypicality. However, because I am using a best fit model

and not best example to create the prototype, only three out of the four features need to be met to make a song prototypical. Timbre is an important feature, but because of the very strong presence of the other three features, their strength combined outweighs the lack of strings.

Persona and Performance Practices

"I Can't Make You Love Me" fits three of the four secondary weighted features and so is a prototypical example of the heartbroken love song genre in popular music/top 100's from 1990-present. Prototypicality indicates there is less friction between the heartbroken textual themes and musical features.[11] The next step is to understand how prototypicality informs the overall persona. As previously mentioned, I am not asserting that there is one persona that fits every single prototypical member of a genre. Instead, I assert that prototypicality enhances the implied persona and influences performance choices such as vocal timbre, phrasing of the melodic line, and body and facial expressions.

One key choice a performer can make is vocal timbre. In Kate Heidemann's (2016) article on vocal timbre in popular music, she says vocal timbre "telegraphs the interior state of a moving body, presenting the blueprints for ways of being and feeling." Altering timbre can drastically change how a song is perceived. Performers alter vocal timbre through placement of the voice in certain areas of mouth, throat and other sympathetic vibrating areas (such as the nose) to create a certain sound. For example, using a breathier tone (where the vocal chords are not allowed to come together completely and letting air escape) can create a more ethereal or soft

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[11] These prototypical cues draw upon Western listeners' expectations of these themes and musical cues (e.g. melancholy and slow tempos or minor mode) (Balkwill and Thompson 1999, Gagnon and Peretz 2003).

mood, while resonating the sound in the chest makes a strong belting quality Moore (2012) equates to emotional intensity (102).

Bonnie Raitt's original interpretation features a slight twang in her timbre which comes from her country music background. Throughout the piece, she scoops and slides to certain notes. This sliding makes the melodic lines sound like sighing or tears at certain points. In the verses, she begins each phrases with a relaxed, full tone, but then ends every phrase with a slight breathy quality (0:32-1:11) (Raitt 1991). The phrase feels unfinished, embodying the resigned dejected feelings of the persona. Raitt chooses to belt more of the chorus, especially the higher notes at the beginnings of the phrases, but still ends many of the lines with a breathy quality (1:12-2:00). The resonant and emotional intensity of the belted Bb4 enhances the emotional release discussed earlier and helps portray the depth of hurt and loss felt over their partner. When she reaches the end of the second verse and goes for the Bb4 on the words "give up this fight" (2:48-2:58), Raitt allows for some raspsiness to come to give the melody a bit of an edge. This increases the intensity of this moment and makes the lyrics sound more desperate than resigned. This is quickly followed by the descending chorus, which reinforces overall resignation and dejection of the implied persona.

The other key factor in creating this persona is through choices in body language and facial expressions. As explained earlier, Balk describes three major channels of perception and projection, kinesthetic and body movement, sight and facial expression, and hearing and voice. Although Raitt reinforces the persona for hearing dominated audience members, we must look to performance recordings to see how the persona can be projected for the other two perceptually biased domains. During the 1992 Grammy awards, Raitt performed this song.[12] During this

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[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmK1H6EXUYs

performance, she is seated the entire time with a closed off and tired looking posture. She is leaning slightly forward, her shoulders slumped over. This choice projects to the kinesthetic biased audience member that the persona of this pieces is tired, dejected, and upset. Because of this neutral posture, the attention is drawn to her face and vocal choices. Raitt chose a very neutral, but somber facial expression. Her brows are slightly furrowed and raised which project a resigned, sad, and hurt persona. She also does not lower her eyes often. During emotional and sad songs, performers close their eyes as if lost in the moment and music. Raitt's choice to keep them open, as though making eye contact with her partner, makes the audience feel as though they are there in the final hours of the relationship. By keeping her eyes open, the pain, hurt, and vulnerability of this final moment is conveyed directly to the audience. It makes the entire song more intimate and projects the resignation and heartbreak implied by both the text and musical features.

Raitt's choices, both vocally and physically, are coherent with the implied persona of "I Can't Make You Love Me." She chooses moments to use breathy and belting timbres to convey the resignation and sadness over the heartbreaking realization that they cannot make this person love her. Her choice of seated, closed off posture and subtle, but affective facial expressions reinforce these feelings and further create the tired and dejected persona necessary to perform this piece. If she had made other choices, such as a more active posture (swaying with the music, walking around the stage, etc.) or chose to finish more of her phrases without the breathy quality, the persona would contrast with the prototypicality of the song and not reinforce the persona that the piece informs.

In my own performance of this song, I will be drawing on some of the choices that Raitt demonstrated in both her recording and live performance. Before doing the analysis of this piece,

I had sung this piece with anger in the choruses. I would finish my phrases with more intensity and choose to belt most of the chorus. After recognizing the prototypicality of this song, this choice seemed counterproductive to the persona this song informs. Now I choose to let my phrases die off with a breathier tone and use a louder belt only at certain points. Also, my body language was more active in earlier performances. After watching her Grammy performance, however, I saw the effectiveness of stillness. It brought the attention to her facial expression and the lyrics themselves. I now choose to stand still with dropped shoulders to close off my posture slightly and do little with my hands. This then will bring the attention to my facial expressions, which I am trying to do subtly, but effectively. By understanding the prototypicality of "I Can't Make You Love Me," the understanding of the overall persona is enhanced for the performer. The descending melodic contour, harmonic composition, and tempo contribute to the hurt, dejected, and resigned implied persona needed for this piece.

Chapter 6: Atypical Popular Music Song: Desperation and Friction in "All I Ask"

Background

Four years after her second album *21* was released, Adele's long awaited *25* album finally dropped in 2015 (Dolan 2015). Adele has described her inspiration for the album as coming from her own experience of growing older and her changing life: "I've had a lot of regrets since I turned 25, and sadness hit me in different ways that it used to" (Hiatt 2015). Although Adele is known for writing most of her own music, she collaborated with Bruno Mars for "All I Ask." The song was intended to be up-tempo but instead turned into a ballad (Hiatt 2015). Mars' style is apparent in the piece. His work draws heavily on '60s doo-wop and new wave R&B and that drama of both styles is heard throughout the song. It only took two days to write and features what Adele calls her most "showoffy vocals" (Hiatt 2015).

The song received positive reviews with Rolling Stone, calling it "the most powerful moment" of the album and commenting on how mature her music sounded (Dolan 2015). The overall effect is different from "I Can't Make You Love Me." While "I Can't Make You Love Me" was prototypical and required a more vulnerable and dejected persona, "All I Ask" only fits one of the features strongly. This makes "All I Ask" an atypical example. The atypicality informs an overall persona that shifts from a vulnerable yet guarded persona in the verses to a desperate and pleading persona in the chorus. I did not often find a pleading and desperate persona in survey of the popular music corpus; instead, a dejected and resigned persona was more common.

Text Interpretation

The text depicts someone at the end of a relationship asking for one more night where they can feel the love that they used to share with their partner. The first verse depicts the persona coming to the partner asking for one last night. They describe how they will leave the feelings that they had at the door and how they "won't say a word…They've all been said before, you know." The verse ends by them asking their partner to "play pretend" for a little while and not think about what happens after this last night. The pre chorus acknowledges that they understand that this will be the last night they have together, but uses the title line to lead into the chorus. In the chorus, the persona becomes more pleading and asks if this really is the last night they are together that their partner be with them like "…more than just a friend." They want one more memory of the intimacy they shared together because, as communicated at the end of the chorus, they are scared that they might never love again.

The second verse is similar to the first verse in that its starts by asking their partner to put away their feelings for a moment. However, halfway through it switches to a more desperate place. The persona says their partner was the "only one that matters" and how no one else knows them like they do. Because of this, they ask who can they run to now that they can no longer rely on their partner in moments of vulnerability? The chorus again repeats the same text as before, but is then followed by the bridge. The bridge text seems like one last different attempt to get their partner to give them this night. They describe it as being their "lesson in love" or the "way we remember us," when they know that this will only hurt them both. It ends with the persona saying that they do not need forgiveness for whatever had caused the end of the relationship, but they need this last night. The song ends with one final chorus and the haunting and hurt line "Cause what if I never love again?"

The textual themes are very similar to "I Can't Make You Love Me," but uses some interesting word choices. For example, the use of the word "lovers" in the line "take me by the hand while we do what lovers do," sounds not as realistic as saying "what we used to do." Bruno Mars originally didn't agree with including the word "lovers." He was quoted saying that he did not "know if anybody really says 'lovers'" (Dolan 2015). However, after Adele fought to keep this word choice, he later changed his feelings on the line saying it "makes the song bigger because no one says it…it pops out…it pops out" (Dolan 2015). The textual themes of "All I Ask" fit the first weighted feature of the genre and therefore makes it a member of the heartbroken popular music genre. It is an atypical member because it only fits one feature strongly and another weakly. The requirement for prototypicality is at least three features. The atypicality enhances the shifting implied persona from more vulnerable but controlled verses to desperate and pleading choruses.

Melodic Contour

The verse of "All I Ask" is comprised mostly of descending lines made up of broken rhythms. For example, the first phrase in measures 5-8 is broken into small chunks that almost all end in descent (Figure 31, mm. 5-8) (Adkins et al. 2015). The range is also fairly low, not going above D#4 and going as low as E3 (Figure 31). The descending contour works similarly to "I Can't Make You Love Me" in that it implies vulnerability and dejection. However, the range of the descent (excluding measure 8) is much smaller than "I Can't Make You Love Me." I interpret this lack of range as the persona attempting to maintain control of their heartbroken emotions. The effect is that of someone trying to keep their voice low and controlled, even though there might be underlying more intense emotions trying to bubble to

the surface. The descending contour enhances the implied persona that is vulnerable and

dejected, while the limited range informs helps to portray the attempt at control.
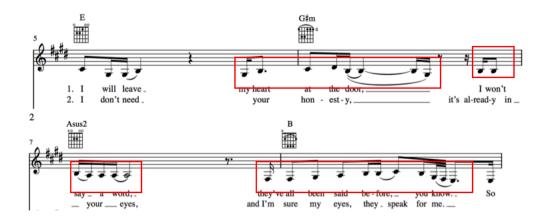

Figure 31: "All I Ask" mm. 5-8. Red boxes highlighting the descending phrases in the

verse

Unlike "I Can't Make You Love Me," the melodic contour of the chorus in "All I Ask"

is generally ascending. The ascending melodic lines themselves are very grand and soaring,

heard from measures 16-19. The chorus begins with a dramatic anacrusis of ascending

sixteenth notes that climb up from B3 to G#4 (Figure 32, mm. 16-17), then followed by

another triplet ascending anacrusis from G#4 to B4 (Figure 32, mm. 17-18). The phrase

continues in slower descending notes back to G#4 before ascending up to B4 in measure 19.
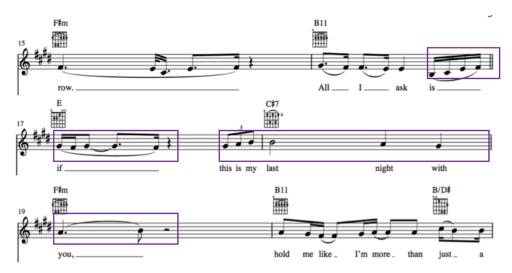
Figure 32: "All I Ask" mm. 15-20. Purple boxes highlight generally ascending phrases in chorus.

As mentioned before, ascent is often associated with aspirational feelings (Moore 2012, 96). This ascent contradicts the prototypical descending contour feature of the chorus. By using ascending contour and aspiration, text, which on its own could be interpreted as vulnerable, now could be interpreted as hopeful. In a heartbroken love song, hope is not typically a common textual theme. This provides a challenge when trying to portray the vulnerability of the text with these grand ascending lines. Therefore, I interpret the ascending lines as a little hopeful (because the persona wants this last night), but mostly pleading and desperate. The persona is making a desperate request, rather than dejected or given up. The desperation and pleading comes through from the text itself (e.g. "this is my last night with you, hold me like I'm more than just a friend) and enhanced by ascending lines which conventionally represent aspirational feelings.

Later in the chorus, however, we hear a strategically placed melodic descent that causes a persona shift from the pleading, desperate, and slightly hopeful persona at the beginning of the chorus to the more dejected and almost fearful persona at the end of the chorus. The melody leaps up to C5 which is then followed by a rhythmically irregular descent

to C3 (Figure 33, mm. 24-26). Two things about this choice makes these three measures affective. First is the association with the words:

> Take me by the hand while we do what lovers do
> It matters how this ends

This is the moment where the sadness and vulnerability of the verses returns. The descending contour reinforces this return by using not only the convention of descending contour and melancholy, but also the association of vulnerability already established by the descending lines in the verse. The second is the way the melody is broken down rhythmically. There is a 16th note rest on the second beat of measure 25 which mimics a voice breaking from overwhelming emotions. It reinforces the persona's realization that the relationship is ending. The last line of text in the chorus reveals the true fears of the persona which is that they might never love again. The melody leaps up and then mostly stays between G#4 and A4 on the line "What if I never love again" (Figure 33, mm. 28). Though the phrase authentically cadences back to an E chord in measure 29, the next phrase begins immediately, creating a phrase elision. This destabilizes the cadence, making the thought feel unfinished as if the persona pushes the thought away. This simple, contour-neutral melody, after following all of the soaring ascending and descending melodies and the phrase elision on the following cadence implies a moment of vulnerability. The persona has then shifted back to the more vulnerable place it was in the verses, but with an added element of fear that they might never love again. This will be an important section that I will highlight in my performance through timbre and kinesthetic choices.
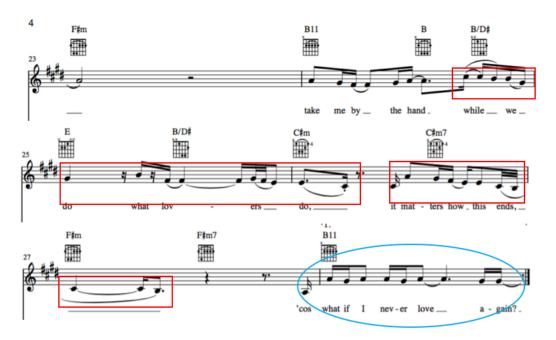
Figure 33: "All I Ask," mm. 26-28. Red: descending lines in chorus. Blue: simplicity of final line of chorus

Harmonic Composition

The harmonic composition of the verses and choruses fit the common pattern defined by the corpus study. The verses have about 30% minor chords within seven changes and the choruses have about 23% within 17 changes. Though the harmonic composition meets this feature, this is not as clear upon first listening to the piece. This is due to the placement of the major and minor chords.

One particularly striking example is in the beginning of the chorus and the use of the secondary dominant. Measure 16 uses a C# major chord (V^7/ii) that resolves to F# minor (ii). Secondary dominants are used in popular music, but as chromatic chords are inherently unexpected as they are not in the key. The use of the V^7/ii also briefly tonicizes ii. It makes the moment sound much more grand and unconventional because of the surprising chromatic

chord, even though it comes right in the middle of the text "if this is my last night with you,"
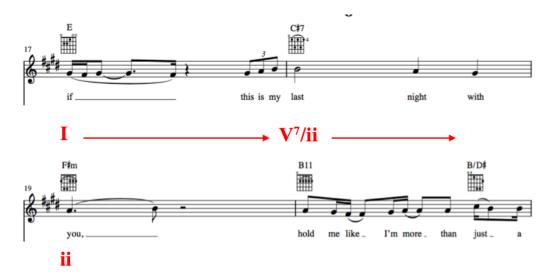which is a very vulnerable phrase.

Figure 34: "All I Ask" mm. 17-20. Visual of secondary dominant in chorus

The bridge in "All I Ask" contrasts harmonically from the rest of the piece and
provides new insight into the implied persona. Although there are many types of bridges, de
Clercq (2012) describes three main ways a bridge can be described. It can contrast with the
rest of the piece, have no tonal closure, and be defined by its placement within the form (71).
The bridge of "All I Ask" follows all these conventions. The beginning of the bridge starts
with an $E^{7,}$ acting no longer as the tonic but a $V^{4/2}/IV$ which resolves to IV (A major chord).
This destabilizes the tonicity and sets up the listener to accept the second instance of a
secondary dominant with the use of G# major chord in measure 35 resolving to the C# minor
chord in measure 36. Though this destabilization is common, it still aids in creating another
desperate moment of bargaining. I interpret this destabilization as another attempt to get this
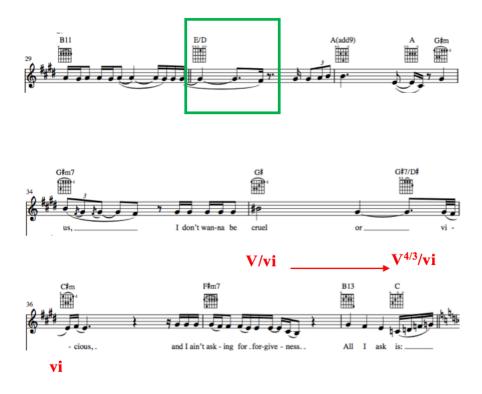final night with their partner.

Figure 35: "All I Ask" mm 29-38. Green box highlighting E^7 in fourth inversion. Red showing secondary dominant movement

The text in the bridge speaks to their partner about how they want this moment and remember this relationship.

In particular, the line "and I ain't asking for forgiveness" sets up the explosive emotions in the last chorus. The melodic contour descends with this text as well, indicating a moment of vulnerability and realization and is accompanied with an F# minor chord (playing again into our intuition as Western listeners that minor chords are often associated with a sad emotion). This combination reinforces the vulnerability, but I also interpret it as the persona not expecting any of the emotional connection or understanding from the partner.

Another notable harmonic choice is the key change in the last chorus from E major to F major. This type of modulation is known as the "truck driver modulation" and is a fairly cliché in pop music (Everett 2009). It is used either for color or to create a dramatic effect

(Everett 2009). The modulation is set up by the conventional use of the V of the new key, which in this case is a C major chord in measure 38 (Everett 2009, 300). Despite being common in popular music, this modulation type was not found in any of the members of the corpus study and is therefore unexpected in the heartbroken genre. I interpret the half step shift up to F major, though a cliché in pop music, as a last desperate emotional plea for understanding. Instead of "I Can't Make You Love Me," where there was this feeling of resignation, loss, and some resentment in the final chorus, the pleading, desperation felt by the persona in the first half of the chorus is heightened in the final chorus of "All I Ask."

The final line of song also brings the only moment of closure in the whole piece by cadencing back on tonic (F major now) without the elision (Figure 36). The rhythmic density also reduces from sixteenth and eighth notes to quarter notes, with the final chord in whole notes (Figure 38). While this rhythmic change is nothing really unexpected in popular music, the use of it here helps bring closure to the piece.

Figure 36: "All I Ask" mm. 49-52 Analysis of final cadence of "All I Ask"

The melody is also elongated on the word "love" which allows for this closure to occur in the setup of the cadence from C to F. Finality of the harmony and melodic contour create friction with the final iteration of the question "what if I never love again?" I interpret the friction as the persona beginning to accept of the reality of this relationship's end and that they may

never love another partner this way. The question is still asked, but the finality created by the cadence makes the question sound more like a statement.

Tempo

Tempo is another feature that should indicate "All I Ask" is being prototypical. However, the actual tempo of 71 is not immediately apparent because of the accompaniment's rhythmic texture. The entire piece has this driving motion to it that comes from the very active right hand of the piano. The verses are accompanied by an interlocking syncopated pattern with a short repeating ascending melody (mm. 5-7). The choruses have an alternating sixteenth note pattern that again drive the piece forward. This accompaniment pattern destabilizes the feature because it makes the song feel faster than it is. The density pushes the song along and reinforces the attempt to cover up the true feelings of heartbreak as indicated by the tempo. However, 71bpm is the tempo and therefore would contribute to its prototypicality, though weakly.

Instrumental Timbre

Again, like "I Can't Make You Love Me," "All I Ask" has no string part. The only instrument in the accompaniment is piano. This adds to the atypicality of the song since it is a feature found in 10 of the 12 members of the corpus.

Persona

The atypicality creates friction between the text and music in "All I Ask" and helps inform a persona that shifts between sad, vulnerable, and somewhat controlled in the verses, to pleading and desperate, but end dejected and fearful in the choruses (Figure 37).
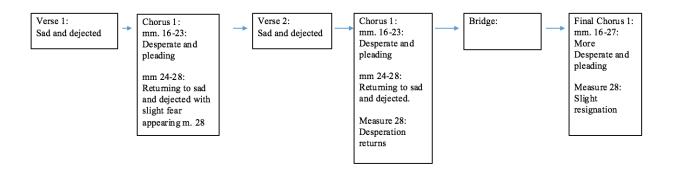
| Verse 1: Sad and dejected | → | Chorus 1: mm. 16-23: Desperate and pleading

mm 24-28: Returning to sad and dejected with slight fear appearing m. 28 | → | Verse 2: Sad and dejected | → | Chorus 1: mm. 16-23: Desperate and pleading

mm 24-28: Returning to sad and dejected.

Measure 28: Desperation returns | → | Bridge: | → | Final Chorus 1: mm. 16-27: More Desperate and pleading

Measure 28: Slight resignation |

Figure 37. Visual representation of persona shifts

Because of the melodic contour, the first verse implies a sad and dejected persona. The range of descending lines is small enough that it sounds as though the persona is trying to control these heartbroken emotions. The first half of the chorus contains long ascending lines that are causing friction with the heartbroken and hurt text. Friction is also created by certain harmonic choices, such as the secondary dominant in the middle of the phrase "this is my last night with you." The friction then helps inform the desperate and pleading persona of the chorus through the heightened intensity from the ascending melodic contour and harmonic choices. At the end of the first chorus, the persona becomes less desperate and returns to the emotions found in the verses. This alternation between a sad, dejected, trying to maintain control persona and the pleading, desperate persona continues through the next verse and chorus. The bridge is the final desperate attempt to bargain for this last night, until the break on the line "And I ain't asking for forgiveness" where the fear returns. This leads into a final release of all emotion and fear in the final chorus where the combination of the key change and soaring melody reveals just how desperately the persona needs this moment. This persona alternation adds a level of complexity when it comes to performance choices. I will need to make certain timbre, body language, and facial expression changes to emphasize this shifting between sad and dejected verse and the more pleading desperate choruses.

Recording and Performance Analysis

In the 2016 original interpretation from Adele's album 25, she is able to capture this complex shifting persona with her emotionally charged vocals. In the first verse, Adele uses a softer tone and lets some breathiness come through (0:13-0:40) (Adele 2015). Because she is softer and gentler at the beginning, the natural rasp of her voice comes out. This softness makes the beginning of the first verse feel tender and almost wistful, like the she is already imagining the aftermath of the meeting. This timbre choice also reinforces the idea of the persona trying to control the sad dejected emotions that are implied in the descending contour and text. At the end of the pre chorus, Adele's voice almost sounds like it's breaking on the phrase "all I ask" (0:51-0:52). It adds a moment of vulnerability that leads into the desperate chorus.

The chorus comes in with Adele using a belting chest voice, which Moore (2012) equates with power and high emotions (106). The desperate and pleading persona informed by the ascending lines and harmonic choices is reinforced by this timbre choice. Desperation and pleading are both highly emotional states and therefore need the intensity from the belt. However, Adele rarely finishes phrases and sometimes sounds as if she's throwing away some of the higher notes. For example, the end of the phrase "this is my last night with you" the timbre switches from belting to a breathier sound (1:02). Again the switch of timbre occurs when Adele goes to the C#5 on the word "memory" (1:11). It creates a moment of wistfulness, as if she can picture the moment like it has already happened. Not finishing every phrase helps carry over some of the dejection and hurt in the verses while not completely detracting from the shifted persona. The chorus ends with the most apparent moment of vulnerability on the words "what if I never love again." Adele's voice breaks like she is holding back emotion that just cannot be

held down any longer (1:30-1:36). This choice in particular helps reinforce the persona shift that occurs in the second part of the chorus. The combination of descending melodic contour as well as the elided cadence brings back the sadness and dejection of the verses. Adele's break though in her voice helps bring in that small amount of fear (as described earlier) that this will be the last time the persona ever loves someone like this again.

The second verse begins much like the first with the return back to the softer, more relaxed tone. The intensity begins to build though towards the end of the verse. Adele deviates from the written melody on the words "No one knows me like you do and since you're the only one that mattered, tell me who do I run to." Instead of descending like in the first verse, she flips the contour and uses the ascension to use her belt again (2:02-2:14). This choice changes the persona from sad and dejected, which the listener expects in the verses to a persona that feels more desperate, like in the choruses.

The chorus again uses the contrast of belting and breathy timbre to accentuate the text and persona. The difference in this chorus is the ending. The phrase "what if I never love again" no longer sounds broken, but is belted with the most power we have felt up to this point in the song (3:05-3:10). This helps transition into the bridge, which uses almost exclusively a belting timbre up until the word "cruel" where she switches back to the breathy tone (3:26). These timbre switches also bring the persona back from the emotionally charged sound created by the loud belt, to the more subdued sounding timbre we recognized from the first verse. It helps the audience understand the realization that the persona is trying to pretend they do not need emotional closure but physical closure, which is heartbreaking, and therefore needed that timbre change.

The emotional buildup of the song is finally released in the final chorus. Adele belts this section with more volume and intensity than the previous two choruses, which heightens the already desperate and pleading persona of the final chorus (3:39-4:10). One interesting choice is her timbre on the final time line "while we do what lovers do" is sung. Adele, instead of letting this moment get softer like in the previous two choruses, keeps the energy up and even adds a bit of a growl on the word "what" (4:07-4:10). The growl and volume adds an edge that has not been heard before on this line. The descending contour informs the softening of Adele's timbre when the line was before sung. The contrast again heightens the desperation in the last chorus informed by the ascending melodic contour and modulation. The final line of the song "what if I never love again" is where Adele uses her breathy tone one last time on the extended note on the word "love" (4:16-4:23). The timbre switch brings back the sadness and dejection felt in the verses to express the heartbreak and hurt the persona feels at this realization.

Adele's performance choices in this recording enhance the persona shifts that are essential to this piece. The shifting from sad and dejected to desperate are informed by atypicality and change the way we see the portrayal of heartbroken feelings. Instead of the resignation and sadness seen throughout "I Can't Make You Love Me," the atypical features of "All I Ask" cause shifting of personas.

In a performance at Manchester Arena, one can watch the shifting between these two personas in her body language or, as Balk (1985) describes them, kinesthetic choices[13] (Balk 1985, 60). She begins by standing very still with a neutral posture. Her face is also fairly neutral. These two choices together set up the aspect of the persona that is attempting to control their feeling of sadness needed in the first verse of the song. Adele then progressively gets more

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[13] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xE82rCl4IM8

forward in her body language, which enhances the desperation in the choruses. Her face also gets more and more animated as the song progresses as well. She does however return to this more relaxed, but frightened expression on the words "what if I never love again" (1:26-1:30) and "all I ask" (3:33-3:36), which again helps develop the breakdown of the persona. Overall, her performance seems less about the persona and more about nailing the notes and putting on an enjoyable show. She uses her hands sometimes to conduct herself which can be distracting. However, it does not diminish the power of the song because of the presence of the kinesthetic choices she has made.

From this analysis, I have identified a few things that will add to my performance. I will highlight the shifts in timbre and volume as the song progresses and goes between verse and chorus. This will help create the shifts in persona that are essential in this piece. Also, not finishing certain phrases or changing the timbre on the higher notes on words like "memory" will help project vocally the persona of outer strength and underlying desperation. One element I will highlight more than she did in the recorded or live performances is the rhythmic separation on the line "while we do what lovers do." The rests in the middle of the descending melodic line contrast with the first half of the chorus. By emphasizing that break, it will help the audience hear the shift back from desperate and pleading to sad and dejected. I also will try to emulate the body language choices made by Adele in her own performance. I felt that the neutral stance and the beginning that transitioned to the more forward and desperate posture helped break down the outer wall so, by the time the last chorus comes, there is more movement in the body. This will help translate the emotional changes of the persona to an audience member that is more kinesthetically biased (Balk 1985, 60). Finally, the facial expressions will be key in letting in the vulnerability that is an important aspect of any persona in the heartbroken love song genre. This

would look like softening of the face on lines like "what if I never love again" while furrowing

the brow or projecting frustration in areas like the second verse. These elements will help portray

the persona needed for not only this atypical song, but help keep it within the genre of

heartbroken love songs.

Conclusion

By using a prototype theory based approach, I defined features that contribute to prototypicality in heartbroken songs of both opera arias and popular music/top 100 from 1990 to present. Features which defined the opera arias are tempos below 100bpm, melodies with generally descending contours, *pianto* motifs, coloratura lines, minor mode, and simple accompaniment texture. Popular music features include tempos under 100bpm, choruses either with a higher percentage of major chords than the verses or the "singer-songwriter" chord progression, melodic contour that was generally descending, and strings. When comparing the two stylistic genre, one can notice a significant amount of feature overlap. Both have tempos below 100bpm that draw on the convention in Western music that slow is more melancholy and enhances the emotional and heartbroken feelings for prototypical pieces (Balkwill and Thompson 1999). The overall melodic contour is also shared. Descending lines are heavily featured in both genres and often represent sighing, tears, or sadness.

In popular music, however, the text painting is less overt than in opera arias. The opera aria genre has features such as the *pianto* topic, which uses the minor descending half step to represent tears or sighing (Monelle 2000). The *pianto* topic is not as common in popular music and therefore a contributor only to the opera genre. However, the general descending melodic contour demonstrates the crossover of descent sometimes representing sadness in both Western genres. Coloratura is also only found in the opera genre. This is a stylistic embellishment that represents extreme and heightened emotions. In popular music, this could be correlated to melismas and embellishments that popular music artists add to melodies. However, this kind of embellishment was not found in the corpus of the heartbroken popular music/top 100s genre and therefore not contributing to prototypicality.

Features that did not overlap as much are harmony, texture, or instrumental timbre. Harmonic composition differed between the two genres. In opera arias, minor mode contributes to prototypicality. This draws on Western listeners expectations of minor and melancholy and enhances the prototypicality of a piece (Balkwill and Thompson 1999). However, in popular music, I look instead at harmonic composition. The reason for this choice in popular music is to account for the inconsistency in key throughout popular music or uses of modes and to create a standard way of analyzing the harmonic composition. Looking instead at the amount of minor chords in verse or choruses, I attempt to see if a higher percentage of minor chords contributes to prototypicality. The corpus shows that there is a higher percentage of minor chords in the verses than the chorus. This correlation is then used to describe whether a song is prototypical or atypical. In the opera genre, I identify accompaniment texture that is simple or homophonic as contributing to prototypicality. The simplicity supports the slow tempo feature and also allows the vocal line to be heard more clearly. In popular music, I instead look at instrumental timbre. Strings appear in almost every member of the chorus and therefore was a strong feature in favor of prototypicality.

The persona of both prototypical examples draw on similar themes. The persona informed by the prototypical opera aria "Ach ich fühl's" is one of sadness, hurt, and overwhelming loss that borders on hysteria. This requires the performer to accentuate sections such as large leaps, repeated phrases, and coloratura lines with timbre, dynamic, and body language to create this hurt and broken persona. In "I Can't Make You Love Me," the persona is similar in that it also projects hurt and sadness, but also dejection and resignation. Though there are sections, such as the chorus, that require more emotional intensity, there is also less projection of overwhelming emotion and hysteria in "I Can't Make You Love Me." This can be

brought out by focusing on phrasing the descending lines and using a belt timbre in specific areas as well as choosing body language that enhances the implied persona. Both personas are very open about the vulnerability felt at the loss of their love.

When friction arose due to atypical musical features combining with textual themes, both examples had a person related to control. "In "Porgi amor" the persona seems as though she is hiding her true hurt, while the persona in "All I Ask" tries to control the hurt of the verses, but gives way to the desperation and pleading emotions in the beginning chorus. They require the performer to examine heartbreak in a new context that is created by the friction between atypical features and conventional text. The challenge for the performer in both pieces is revealing hurt and vulnerability in key moments of descending contour or major chords. This can be done by highlighting prototypical moments with vocal timbre, dynamic, or physical changes.

From the beginning of the project's development, I wanted to understand why I heard "I Can't Make You Love" and "All I Ask" both as heartbroken love songs, but as different personas. These instincts lead me to think that there are musical features associated with the two pieces that influences my perception. This drew me to explore how these musical features are either typical or not of a genre. As a primarily Western music listener, I have grown up surrounded by certain musical conventions and prototypes. Matthew Brown (2004) connected this concept of audience and composer musical expectations to creating these conventions and prototypes over time. Because I am a Western listener and performer, my perception of these songs is drawn upon these expectations. This bias definitely influenced the creation of the corpus for both genres, but because the bias is based off of my body of experience in Western music, the features found in both still have validity.

In practical application, this process might seem overly complicated. However, performers of Western music could also use this framework in a more simplified way. By gathering a small sample of songs that are of a particular musical style and textual theme, a performer could look at what musical features are similar or prototypical within this thematic and stylistic genre. This would provide context and understanding of the norms of the genre and allow a performer to determine if there is friction between the text and musical features. This type of contextual understanding as shown above helps a performer understand the persona of a particular piece. With this added understanding of the persona, the performer can now make choices to enhance the implied persona and its projection to their audience.

Reflection

Throughout the process of developing this framework and doing the analyses, I have found that I am much more thoughtful in how I approach a piece. My deeper understanding of each piece influenced the development of the specific personas and the performance choices I made to convey this to my audience. "Ach ich fühl's" being the prototypical member of the heartbroken opera aria genre presents the broken, hurt, and almost hysterical quality informed by the musical features. As mentioned in chapter three, the challenge with this piece is to balance the technical aspects of the song while still creating the persona. There are times as well where I have to accept that my own vocal abilities will not achieve the choices that I feel would make the greatest effect. For example, the high Bb in measure 29 should be very soft, but for me to reach that note I needed to make it more mezzo-piano. To compensate for this, I focus more on my facial expression and body language to emphasize the loss and sadness that Pamina is feeling over the apparent loss of Tamino. This would still project to the kinesthetic and visually biased audience members and hopefully still convey some level of the persona to the more auditory

biased audience members as well. One performance choice that I will make because of my analysis is to emphasize the descending line in mm. 8-10 (See figure in "Ach ich fühl's" chapter). The text painting as described earlier uses a descending melody (that outlines a Bb chord) that ends with a *pianto* topic to describe happy feelings leaving the persona's heart. I highlight the descending line with a louder dynamic and slightly more powerful timbre. This differentiates these measures from the earlier lines which I sing with a softer timbre. I choose to sing the *pianto* topic with an emphasis on the first note to bring attention to the conventional topic.

"Porgi amor" also requires balancing of technique and persona. Although it does not require as much range as "Ach ich fühl's," it requires an immense amount of breath support to complete the long legato lines at such a slow tempo. What I really focused on as mentioned in chapter four, was the balance of vibrato and straight toned notes. It was something I found effective in Yoncheva's performance and something I use to highlight certain phrases. For example, at the beginnings of both measures 28 and 32, I worked on beginning the F5 with no vibrato and crescendoing through the note as well as letting the vibrato develop. This combined with a slightly more forward posture and animation in the face will add the tension needed to help convey the push and pull between the Countess being composed and stoic, while simultaneously being downtrodden by the unfaithfulness of the Count. One performance choice that I will make based off my analysis of the piece is the timbre choice in the lines immediately following the ascending line in mm. 33-35. By contrasting the fortissimo sound of the ascending line with a more quite dynamic level, the dramatic ascent to the high Ab is highlighted.

The pop songs require different vocal techniques and tones than the opera arias. This actually allowed me to explore timbre and dynamics in a different way. Opera tends to favor

vibrato heavy and almost nasal quality. Popular music focuses more on the individual and unique

timbre and attributes the performer has in their voice. These can be qualities like a powerful belt,

an interesting break between chest voice and falsetto, a raspy quality, or rich lower notes. I have

a fairly large belting range (about A4 to C5-D5), but have a fairly strong mix (combination of

falsetto and chest voice) as well. These two timbres are extremely useful for both "I Can't Make

You Love Me" and "All I Ask."

"I Can't Make You Love Me" is fairly low and so mostly resides in my lower chest voice

range. This part of my register can be fairly powerful, so the challenge for me was to create the

softness needed to create the intimacy and guarded feeling of the verses while letting the belt

come through more on the higher notes of the chorus to create distance and emotional intensity. I

did this by using a forward placement of the vowels that I typically use for my mix or head

voice, but in my lower range. Also, as I reached higher notes of a phrase, such as the G4's which

are more in my belt range, I would switch to a more mixed softer tone. This required steady and

strong breath support throughout the lines. I also adopted Raitt's choice of letting the ends of all

the phrases fall away at the end. It accentuates the feeling that the persona is giving up and

finally accepting that they truly cannot make their partner love them. One choice that I make that

is different from the recorded version is an ornamentation I add to measure 23 on the word

"won't" in the second chorus. By ornamenting the note, it adds a moment of rhythmic density

that helps propel the line forward. I immediately follow this by returning to a softer timbre on the

line "Here in the dark" in measure 24. This contrast takes the brief moment of emotional

intensity added by the ornament, but returns to the resignation and dejection the piece implies.

Another attribute from her performance that I incorporate is her use of slightly forward body

language. I do not plan on sitting as she did, but the neutral and forward posture really brings the

attention to the face and to the words themselves. Hopefully, the combination of all three performance areas I will be able to convey the persona to all my audience members on some level.

In "All I Ask," there was a similar balance in creating the difference between verses and choruses. I treated the verses very similarly in timbre to the verses of "I Can't Make You Love Me" expect I finished my phrases with a little more strength. This helped create the controlled intensity needed for the verse persona. The choruses were fairly clear in that they should be belted if possible, but if I do need to use a more mixed timbre, it should always be louder and more animated than the verses. I also wanted to emphasize the endings of the choruses by changing the timbre and volume at measures 24-27. The phrase changes here from long legato lines to a more disjointed rhythm. I am going to start a decrescendo here as well as use the rests to highlight the breakdown of the outer façade of strength. In the bridge, I want to use a similar timbre as the beginning of the choruses to bring the out the pleading nature of the persona, and contrast them with a softer timbre beginning around 35-37. To do this, I used the same technique Adele did where she brought the same tone as the end of the choruses. Here, it helps bring out the breakdown of the persona even more, since the beginning of the bridge is the last plea by the persona to their partner to give them this last night. As stated in chapter six, I will be using very similar body language choices to what Adele did in her performance. I will move from neutral body language to more animated between verse and chorus and have a general increase throughout the song.

In both pop music songs, I chose to stray from the written melody to bring out certain phrases. Though some theorists believe that deviation is problematic, while others, like Moore (2012), believe that adding personal flare to the piece is not because it is just a reinterpretation of

a songwriter's original intention (Moore 2012, 91). It brings in the performer's own personality which Cone (1974) says is vital to bringing life to the persona (Cone 1974, 21).

An issue that surfaced often for me during this process is how do I portray the heartbreak of someone who has lost a great love when I have not experienced this myself? I had to draw from my body of experience that contains many smaller heartbreaks and draw on the emotions felt in those moments. The hurt, frustration, loss, confusion, and often anger were all emotions that I brought out from these shorter lived experiences.

What was harder for me to convey for me was the vulnerability needed in all the piece. When a relationship ends, romantic or not, there is a vulnerability that is exposed. Opening up to someone in a genuine way is difficult, but when it is reciprocated it is what makes relationships of all kinds so important and essential. However, once they end, the first reaction is often fear and hurt that because you opened up and revealed your inner self, that this person does not like your true self. This version of vulnerability is hard to relive and to share in such a public setting, such as performance. To combat this was finding ways to connect with the persona, while still creating a character of sorts. Creating this little bit of distance between my own experiences and the persona allows me to sing this pieces in way that is both true to my feelings, but without me reliving the full force of a heartbreak every time I sang these pieces.

I believe though that sharing this vulnerability is essential in performing. Part of performing in any sense is showing the audience a version of yourself and allowing others to make interpretations of that performances. There is a trust between a performer and their audience that they will watch this vulnerability and accept it. The performer also has to trust themselves to allow this opening up, but not be too hurt if it is not accepted the way they intended. This balance allows for both performer and audience to experience the persona that is

created in a really powerful way. Learning to trust myself with this vulnerability is still

something I am working on as a performer.

By creating this framework, I was able to increase my understanding of the performance

choices and personae for the pieces I analyzed. It allowed me to further my understanding of the

interactions between text and music and how coherence or friction was created by typicality of a

piece. Moving forward, I will now be able to look at pieces in other stylistic and thematic genres

and apply this framework to songs in those genres.

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