

Performance Programme

Student: Anna Roberts

Student Number: 190002954

Accompanist: Ben Smith

Theme:

For this performance, I have created a rounded theme: The cycle of love – from infatuation to heartbreak to empowerment, and the emotions that lie in-between. The realisation of falling in love will be displayed through ‘In His Eyes’, and then ‘My Man’ to emphasise the devotion to another. Then the break-up will be conveyed through ‘There’s A Fine, Fine Line’ and then ‘Out Here on My Own’ to heighten the feeling of loneliness. Finally, ‘I Am Changing’ represents a strong comeback and the reconnection of independence.

In His Eyes

Musical: Jekyll & Hyde (1990)

Music: Frank Wildhorn

Lyrics: Frank Wildhorn, Leslie Bricusse, Steve Cuden

Originally a duet but being performed as a solo.

Theme: The realisation of falling in love

Frank Wildhorn was born in New York in 1958 and built his career as a composer. ‘Jekyll & Hyde’ is his best-known musical, and he also composed “Where Do Broken Hearts Go” a number one hit for Whitney Houston.¹ Leslie Bricusse (b.1931) contributed to many musicals as a composers-lyricist. The award-winning British composer’s songs have been recorded by artists such as Frank Sinatra, Michele Bubl  and Mariah Carey. He is known for his contributions to ‘Jekyll & Hyde’, ‘Doctor Doolittle’ and ‘Willy Wonka’.² Writer, director, and producer Steve Cuden (b. 1955) has worked on musicals including ‘Jekyll & Hyde’, TV series such as ‘X-Men’ and written two books about Broadway and Hollywood.³

Based on Robert Louis Stevenson’s 1886 novel ‘Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde’, ‘Jekyll & Hyde’ is a 1990 musical. ‘In His Eyes’, which is originally a duet between characters Lucy and Emma, appears in the second act, when both women are realising their love for the same man.

I chose this piece because the character is falling in love, she is realising that ‘in his eyes, I can see, where my heart longs to be’. The realisation of love is very powerful, and I believe this

¹ Frank Wildhorn productions, (2012), ‘Biography’, *The Official Website of Composer, Lyricist, and Producer: Frank Wildhorn* <http://www.frankwildhorn.com/Biography.php>

² Leslie Bricusse (2015), ‘Biography’, <https://lesliebricusse.com/index.php>

³ Steve Cuden (2019), ‘About Steve Cuden’, <https://www.stevecuden.com/biography/>

piece represents that well. Filled with strong sections, the piece is displaying the happiness of falling in love, alongside the sadness of uncertainty. Moreover, with the piece originally being a duet there is a heightened sense of sorrow, because both characters are portraying their love for the same man. Taking a duet and performing it as a solo is challenging. Deducting the pieces vocal material so it makes sense as a solo and interchanging between both vocal lines presents many challenges. The piece contains many strong, long, high sections, making the performers breath control important.

My Man

Musical: *Funny Girl* (1964)

Music: Jule Styne

Lyrics: Bob Merrill

Theme: Devotion to your partner

Jule Styne (1905-1994), a recognised talented musician from a young age, was a British-American composer-songwriter. His early songs were full of “wartime longing and nostalgia”, and his later Broadway career was filled with showbiz hits. He is best known for his Broadway Musical which includes ‘*Funny Girl*’, alongside ‘*Gypsy*’ and ‘*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*’.⁴ Bob Merrill (1921-1999) was an American award-nominee songwriter and is considered one of the most successful songwriters of the 1950s. Carrying huge successes from his US and UK singles and musicals, including ‘*Funny Girl*’ and ‘*Carnival!*’.⁵

The musical ‘*Funny Girl*’ is based on Isobel Lennart’s 1964 book and is loosely based biography of Fanny Brice (1891-1951). With Barbra Streisand playing the lead, the musical follows her rise and fall from stardom. I will be performing the Barbra Streisand version.

The majority of pieces within my repertoire could have worked in this section of my theme, because a lot of piece are about love, however, once I heard this piece, I knew I needed to perform it. The power and passion that is projected through her voice shows complete dedication to her lover. She doesn’t care that her life is despair, ‘for whatever my man is, I am his forever more’. The challenges that come alongside this piece include the evident vocal challenges in the second half, but also characterisation. When a piece includes a lot of repetition, the performer must ensure they add shape and feeling to the different sections, to make sure the interest is kept. The contrast between the first and second section present many vocal challenges, most significantly support.

There’s a Fine, Fine Line

Musical: *Avenue Q* (2003)

Music and lyrics: Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx

Theme: Break-up

Robert Lopez (b.1975) is an American-Filipino songwriter. Lopez was a Yale student before meeting Jeff Marx at a workshop, and in 1999 they started working on *Avenue Q* together.

⁴ Broadway: The American Musical (2021), ‘Jule Styne’, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/stars/jule-styne/>

⁵ Masterworks Broadway (2021), ‘Bob Merrill’, *Song Music Entertainment*, <https://masterworksbroadway.com/artist/bob-merrill/>

Lopez is best known for ‘The Book of Mormon’, ‘Avenue Q’ and the Oscar award winning musical movie ‘Frozen’, which was co-written by him and his wife.⁶ Jeff Marx (b.1970), had studied Law before meeting Robert Lopez. After ‘Avenue Q’ he went on to work on shows such as ‘Scrubs’ and Disney’s ‘Bear in the Big Blue House’.⁷

‘There’s a fine, fine line’, is from Avenue Q, an award winning 2003 musical featuring puppet characters controlled by humans. ‘There’s a fine, fine line’ comes when Princeton, one of the main characters, decides to suggest him and Kate, another main character are just friends instead of lovers, and as a result Kate breaks off their relationship.

Explaining the fine line between love and a waste of time, this is the perfect piece to represent a break-up. Although the character is ending the relationship herself, she has been pushed into a corner of disappointment, she has no option, and I believe the composers are trying to show her heartbreak turning into anger. The composers are clearly projecting characterisation as the most important factor of this song, even more so than perfect vocals, making characterisation the most challenging part of this piece. Alongside this, the vocal range, strong dynamics and sprechstimme (cross between speaking and singing) are also challenges.

Out Here on My Own

Musical: Fame – The Musical (1980)

Music: Steve Margoshes

Lyrics: Jacques Levy

Theme: Loneliness

Steve Margoshes is a Juilliard graduate, and a Broadway, symphony orchestra, and pop group composer. With huge success in all three areas (much of it focused on pop bands), ‘Fame – The Musical’ was his more popular Broadway show.⁸ American songwriter, director, and clinical psychologist Jacques Levy (1935-2004), worked closely with Bob Dylan before working on musicals such as ‘Doonesbury’ and ‘Fame’.⁹

David De Silva’s musical ‘Fame – The Musical’ follows the story of New York students at a Performing Arts School. Depending on the performance, ‘Out Here on My Own’ is sometimes related with another song ‘In L.A’. The song is sung by Carmen, a character who is addicted to drugs and is in love with someone who doesn’t love her back, feeling completely alone. Carmen’s story doesn’t have a happy ending, as the character dies of a drug overdose.

I chose to include this piece because I personally find it difficult to perform, although it might not be as vocally challenging as some of the piece in this programme, I find it the most moving. The truthful lyrics, combined with the strong melody and powerful delivery make this piece relatable and difficult. Finding a piece relatable is great for characterisation, if the performer can channel their real emotions into their character, instead of letting them override the performance.

⁶ The Accompanist (2021), ‘Robert Lopez (composer): Biography’, <https://the-accompanist.net/robert-lopez-composer-biography>

⁷ Music Theatre International (n.d. 2021), ‘Jeff Marx’, <https://www.mtishows.com/people/jeff-marx>

⁸ Fandom (2007), ‘Steve Margoshes’, (June 20, 2007), https://jimsteinman.fandom.com/wiki/Steve_Margoshes

⁹ Ken Hunt (2004), ‘Jacques Levy’, (November 26, 2004), *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/nov/26/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries>

I Am Changing

Musical: Dreamgirls (1982/2006)

Music: Henry Krieger

Lyrics: Tom Eyn

I will be performing the 2006 movie adaptation version.

Theme: Empowered comeback

American music theatre composer, Henry Krieger (b.1945), is known for his award-winning musical 'Dreamgirls', alongside other musicals such as 'The Tap Dance Kid' and 'Side Show'.¹⁰ American lyricist, TV writer, playwright and director, Tom Eyn (1940-1991), began his career in experimental theatre. He is also best known for 'Dreamgirls'.¹¹

The Broadway music Dreamgirls follows the story of 'The Dreams' a new trio who rise to fame, and their struggles that come along with it. The song is originally sung by Jennifer Holliday; however, I will be singing the 2006 movie adaptation version, starring Jamie Foxx, Beyonce, Eddie Murphy and Jennifer Hudson, who plays Effie White.

Effie White is the character who performs 'I Am Changing', and this song represents her 'comeback' after a difficult, lonely journey. After spending years alone, 'I Am Changing' is her comeback, displaying her reconnection with her own independence after an awful relationship, where she was left alone and unknowingly replaced from the band 'The Dreams'. The piece itself presents many vocal challenges, such as the large interval leaps, vocal range, long sustained notes challenging breath control and simply the power and support required to perform this song. The characterisation is also important in this piece, and lyrics such as 'I'll be better than I am, but I need a friend' makes the piece relatable, and as mentioned before, feeling a connection with a piece, and being able to channel the similarities into characterisation, make this possible.

¹⁰ Theatrical Rights Worldwide (n.d. 2021), 'Henry Krieger', <https://www.theatricalrights.com/author/henry-krieger/>

¹¹ Concord Theatricals (2021), 'Tom Eyn', <https://www.concordtheatricals.com/a/2291/tom-eyn>