

How to Prepare Solo Vocal Literature

- A. Day 1: text
 - 1. Goals:
 - a. Come to a complete understanding of your piece's text
 - b. Be able to read through the text at a fairly rapid pace with all nuances of diction intact
 - c. Begin memorization of text
 - 2. Tasks
 - a. Translation (if your work is in a foreign language)
 - (1) Make a literal, word-by-word translation of the text, and write that translation in your music above or below the vocal line; do not depend on an preexisting rhymed translation!
 - (2) Understand what your text is about in general: the story line or the general sentiment
 - b. Diction
 - (1) Get help from someone who can pronounce the diction correctly (perhaps a diction tape from your teacher)
 - (2) Work to become completely secure with pronunciation and nuance
 - c. Memorization
 - (1) Write out the text of the piece in poem form on a 4x6 card.
 - (2) Write the original text on one side
 - (3) Write a transliterated pronunciation on the other side (use a method that makes sense to you; if you don't know IPA, come up with your own method)
 - (4) Carry the 4x6 card with you *everywhere* as you memorize your piece
- B. Day 2: rhythm and text
 - 1. Goals
 - a. Be able to correctly execute all rhythmic aspects of your piece
 - b. Be able to unify the diction from day 1 with the rhythm
 - 2. Tasks
 - a. Take rhythmically difficult portions of the music apart
 - b. Carefully couple the diction with the rhythm
 - c. Continue to memorize the text
- C. Day 3: music
 - 1. Goals

- a. Study the work as a piece of music apart from the text or rhythm
 - b. Study the work's *haupteffekt* – the overall effect of the piece
 - c. Memorize the melody
 - d. Begin to form definite ideas of how you want to affect your audience
2. Tasks
- a. Divorce yourself entirely from the text and rhythm for the time being
 - b. Concentrate solely on musical considerations:
 - (1) Melody
 - (2) Dynamics
 - (3) Phrasing and shape of line
 - (4) Tempos and expression markings
 - (5) Pay close attention to the interplay of the melodic and the accompaniment
 - c. Continue to memorize the text
- D. Day 4: melody, rhythm, and text
1. Goals
- a. Artistically fuse together the melody, rhythm and text
 - b. Begin approaching complete memorization
 - c. Make a concerted effort to artistically “own” the piece
2. Tasks
- a. Study all elements within the framework of the accompaniment
 - b. Memorize all elements
 - c. Interpret the piece artistically
 - (1) Ask what you can do to make this work yours personally
 - (2) Consider those strong points and capitalize on those aspects of your delivery
 - (3) Consider your weak points and seek to improve in those areas
 - d. Listen to as many other renditions of the piece as you can find
- E. Day 5: polish and continue memorization
- F. Day 6: polish and complete memorization
- G. Day 7: present your polished performance at your lesson
- H. Week 2: incorporate those suggestions from your lesson into your performance