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Preface

In a constant study of collections available for voice I noticed few which attempt a comprehensive sweep of repertoire in different languages. There are admittedly some cornerstone publications addressing diverse pre-standard or teaching literature, incidentally touching on music by major vocal composers, but these are for student singers at a remedial level. *Standard Vocal Literature* addresses the needs of a typical college singer who has moved beyond teaching literature, but is perhaps not yet ready for a deeper look into a particular genre of song or the work of a single composer. Of course, the singer for whom this collection is a perfect fit need not be a college student. He or she also might be an advanced high school student, or an adult studying classical voice.

The principal aim of the collection is to introduce art song in five languages. The compilation plan is as follows:

- ten songs in English, representing Renaissance and Baroque music by Dowland, Purcell and others, as well as romantic song of the late 19th and early 20th centuries by Quilter, Vaughan Williams and others
- four songs in French, with special emphasis on the songs of Fauré
- six songs in German, with a sampling of music by the greatest lieder composers: Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strauss
- four songs in Italian that branch out beyond the standard early Italian songs students are likely to already be studying, with the deliberate inclusion of music by Bellini to get a taste of bel canto, and Stephano Donaudy, for a broader Italian romanticism
- two songs in Spanish by principal composers

Songs have been chosen with particular voice types in mind, presented in appropriate keys. Beyond art song, the collection includes:

- two opera arias, chosen from the first pieces that most singers study
- one operetta aria by Gilbert & Sullivan
- one oratorio aria as an introduction to the field

In addition to those specific parameters, we made certain that music by Mozart appears in each volume, which many would agree is the very best instruction in beautiful singing.

Because it is so important for students to learn an artistic context for music and poetry, we have provided introductory articles for all songs, including biographical and historical information that could be a springboard for more detailed research. To complete the package, we have recorded carefully prepared piano accompaniments to aid practice, and pronunciation lessons to assist in learning songs.

Each of the 30 selections in this volume is a gem in its own right. May they be the beginning of a lifelong discovery of our great heritage of vocal art music.

Richard Walters
Editor
October, 2004

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