

Interpretation

By Laura Pallas

Why is having an interpretive plan important?

[about Songs] Only from life
itself may life be born.

Lotti Lieman

What are the major elements to understanding interpretation?

- Musical Considerations
- Lyrical Considerations
- Vocal Considerations
- Imagination!

Imagination

- The media through which one's imagination functions is her experiences; the broader and more aesthetically refined the experiences, the greater the resources the singer can draw upon when interpreting a song.

Van Christi

- You don't need to be a great singer to do great singing. However, you do need to have an active, well-directed imagination or great singing is impossible.

Robert Shaw

Vocal Skills: What you must have to pull off what your imagination asks of the music

- Control of the voice is the soil from which interpretation springs.

Lotti Lieman

- Musically, we cannot give what we are not musicians enough to give;
- emotionally, we cannot give what we are incapable of feeling;
- and technically, we cannot give what the vocal instrument is not free to give.

Musical Elements

- Form
- Melody
- Chord Structure
- Tempo / Meter

Form

- Phrases are almost always four or eight measures long

The image displays a musical score for the song "My Wild Irish Rose" in G major and 3/4 time. It is divided into four lines of music, each with a label above it. The first line is labeled "Phrase A" and contains the lyrics: "My wild I - rish Rose, the sweet-est flow'r that grows, You may". The second line is labeled "Phrase B" and contains: "search ev-ry where but none can com - pare with my wild I - rish Rose, My". The third line is labeled "Phrase A" and contains: "wild I - rish Rose, the dear-est (flow'r) that grows, and some". The fourth line is split into two parts: "Phrase B2" for the first part with lyrics "day for my sake she may let me take the" and "Phrase B2 (section slightly different)" for the second part with lyrics "bloom from my wild I - rish Rose". The notes in the first and third lines are red, while the notes in the second and fourth lines are blue.

What can understanding the form do for the interpretation?

- Let the structure help dictate when to breathe
- Inherent “weak” spots
- Discovered patterns and relationships

Melody

- Sing the melody
- Dynamics (As line goes up so does the volume)
- Ranges (Tessitura)
- Repeated notes
- Bass too low/tenor really high?

Chord Structure

- Progressions
- Tension & Release
- Dynamics

Tempo / Meter

- Time signature
- Look at the smallest note duration to make sure tempo is appropriate
- Consider the musical style (Dixieland, Jazz, Driver, Ragtime, Ad lib, Swing)
- Hold it – grow it (do something with it, held notes don't have a beat)

Lyrical Elements

- A singer with a moderately good voice who has mastered the significance of his words will always have the advantage over the possessor of a much finer instrument to whom they are a sealed message.

Madam Marchesi

Lyrical Elements

- Analyze the Text
- Intro (setting the story)
- First time stating the “hook” of the song
- Important words(heart/lonely) /un-important words (and /the)
- Repeated words/echoes
- For Inflection, dramatically speak the text
- Character of the words (“Honey Dear, want you near”)
- Word Painting /Onomatopoeia (“sighing wind”
“And will you laugh with me when...”)

The Barbershop Ballad

- Ad Lib style
- Underlying meter
- Triplets and fat twos

The Uptune

- Tempo is King (watch out for choppiness)
- Rhythm is Queen
- Down beat or Back Beat?

Pop Songs

- How was it originally done?
- Don't let barbershop arrangement "musack" it
- More risks with Interpretation

Interpretation

- Form
- Musical Elements
- Lyrical Elements
- Understand the Barbershop Ballad (ad lib)
- Understand tempo/rhythm – Uptune
- Go to the source for pop music