

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** Vocal Health and Repertoire for the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano: A Suggested Course of Study

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*Vocal Health and Repertoire for the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano: A Suggested Course of Study* brings together the fields of vocal pedagogy and performance. This curriculum guide focuses on repertoire for the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano, ages 18-30. The guide includes selections from the genres of art song (beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels), opera and oratorio arias, concert works, and song cycles. Selected art songs and arias are presented from a vocal health perspective, using McKinney's eight principles of Good Vocal Sound. In addition, the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance model is integrated via the identification of a focus skill for each song or aria.

This suggested course of study emphasizes proper vocal technique and offers suggestions when studying and singing the larger works of the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano repertoire. These suggestions include recommendations gleaned from interviews with well-known mezzo-sopranos Mignon Dunn and Dolora Zajick concerning their opinions regarding repertoire, vocal health, and appropriate song and aria assignments for the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano. The guide also

includes insights into training methods for today's young dramatic voices based on observations of The Institute for Young Dramatic Voices.

Key outcomes and implications are that Dramatic Mezzo-Sopranos must take the time to develop their voices before singing the more advanced arias of the standard repertoire, such as those by Verdi and Wagner, and this can be done through the study of art song. Further, Dramatic Mezzo-Sopranos must be strong technically in their approach to singing to help ensure vocal health and to avoid excessive strain on the vocal folds at all times. Dramatic Mezzo-Sopranos must also have strong skills in musicianship and performance in order to meet the demands of the repertoire for this voice type. The information presented in this curriculum guide will assist both voice teachers and performers in the teaching and singing of repertoire for the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano.