Zwischenfach – a Distinct Voice Type: A Study of Fach through Specific Roles in the Works of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss

Stephanie Weiss
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, ariasteph@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Music Commons, and the Performance Studies Commons

Repository Citation
http://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations/2445

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.
ZWISCHENFACH – A DISTINCT VOICE TYPE: A STUDY OF FACH THROUGH SPECIFIC ROLES IN THE WORKS OF RICHARD WAGNER AND RICHARD STRAUSS

By

Stephanie Patricia Weiss

Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance
New England Conservatory of Music
1997

Bachelor of Science in Biology
Tufts University
1997

Master of Music in Vocal Performance
University of Missouri, Kansas City
2001

A doctoral document submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Doctor of Musical Arts

Department of Music
College of Fine Arts
The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2015
We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

Stephanie Patricia Weiss

entitled

*Zwischenfach – a Distinct Voice Type: A Study of *Fach* through Specific Roles in the Works of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss*

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Musical Arts**
Department of Music

Alfonse Anderson, D.M.A., Committee Chair
David Weiller, M.M., Committee Member
Linda Lister, D.M.A., Committee Member
Tod Fitzpatrick, D.M.A., Committee Member
Nate Bynum, M.F.A., Graduate College Representative
Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the Graduate College

May 2015
ABSTRACT

_Zwischenfach – a Distinct Voice Type: A Study of Fach through Specific Roles in the Works of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss_

By

Stephanie Weiss

Dr. Alfonse Anderson, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Music
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The term _Zwischenfach_ has been described in a small number of papers, with the emphasis on its paradoxes and its lack of research. However, in none of these papers is there concrete evidence that the _Zwischenfach_ should be considered a separate voice category rather than simply an “in-between” _Fach_. The goal of this paper is to explore the thesis that the _Zwischenfach_ should be considered a separate and distinct _Fach_. Supporting evidence includes studies on tessitura, range, vowel usage, and the orchestration of roles, as examined in the arias of five characters in the operas of Wagner and Strauss. Establishing the _Zwischenfach_ as a distinct vocal identity will lead to improved and more focused training of young _Zwischenfach_ singers and better alignment of roles and voices in the casting process.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first of all thank my committee for their guidance throughout my degree program and with this document. I give my heartfelt thanks to my mentor, teacher, chair of my committee, colleague, and friend, Dr. Alfonse Anderson, for his support and assistance. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Linda Lister for giving me so many opportunities as her graduate assistant and for her advice throughout the program. I would also like to thank Dr. Tod Fitzpatrick, Professor David Weiller, and Professor Nate Bynum for their support through this degree.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family. They have always been so supportive of everything I have done, especially in music, and have traveled the world to support me in my singing career. And now that I have returned to academia, I could not have written this document without the help of my mother, who has spent hours helping me edit. Thank you! And thank you also to my father and brother for always supporting me in every way.

I would also like to thank all of my previous voice teachers and music teachers who led me on the path to becoming the singer and musician I am today. And finally, thank you to Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss who have given the world such wonderful music and a home to the Zwischenfach.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................. iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................... iv

LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER 2: DEFINITIONS ............................................................................................ 7

2.1 DEFINITION OF FACH ......................................................................................... 7

2.2 DEFINITION OF ZWISCHENFACH ...................................................................... 10

CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEZZO-SOPRANO FROM THE ERA OF THE CASTRATI ................................................................. 14

3.1 FEMALE VOICES BEFORE 1840 .......................................................................... 14

3.2 EARLY VOCAL PEDAGOGIES .............................................................................. 15

3.3 FEMALE VOICES IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD: NEW PEDAGOGIES ......... 18

CHAPTER 4: ROMANTIC AESTHETICS .......................................................................... 21

4.1 WAGNER .............................................................................................................. 21

4.2 STRAUSS ............................................................................................................ 30

4.3 IMPORTANT SINGERS OF WAGNER’S AND STRAUSS’S TIME WHO WOULD NOW BE CONSIDERED ZWISCHENFACH .................................................. 36

CHAPTER 5: OPERAS AND ZWISCHENFACH ROLES .................................................. 40

5.1 WAGNER .............................................................................................................. 44

5.11 ADRIANO IN RIENZI ......................................................................................... 44

5.12 VENUS IN TANNHÄUSER .................................................................................. 53

5.13 KUNDRY IN PARSIFAL ....................................................................................... 61

5.2 STRAUSS ............................................................................................................ 66

5.21 OCTAVIAN IN DER ROSENKAVALIER .............................................................. 66

5.22 THE KOMPONIST IN ARIADNE AUF NAXOS .................................................. 70

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION .......................................................................................... 77

6.1 A NEW VOCAL IDEAL – THE ZWISCHENFACH OF TODAY .......................... 77

6.2 CONCLUDING STATEMENT ............................................................................... 78

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS ....................................................................... 81

APPENDIX B: FORMANTS .......................................................................................... 83

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................... 85
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adriano’s entrance in <em>Rienzi</em></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adriano’s cavatina in <em>Rienzi</em></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>End of the word “Sterbe” with full orchestra in <em>Rienzi</em></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use of <em>fortepiano</em> in <em>Rienzi</em></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>End of Adriano’s scene in <em>Rienzi</em></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Venus’s “Geliebter, komm” from <em>Tannhäuser, Dresdner Fassung</em> ...............</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Venus’s “Geliebter, komm” from <em>Tannhäuser, Pariser Fassung</em> ...............</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>End of Venus’s “Geliebter, komm” from <em>Tannhäuser, Pariser Fassung</em> .......</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kundry’s “Ich sah das Kind” from <em>Parsifal</em></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Climax of Kundry’s “Ich sah das Kind” from <em>Parsifal</em></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>End of Kundry’s “Ich sah das Kind” from <em>Parsifal</em></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Octavian’s “Du, du, du” from <em>Der Rosenkavalier</em></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Octavian’s “Ich bin dein Bub” from <em>Der Rosenkavalier</em></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Komponist’s aria from <em>Ariadne auf Naxos</em></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>“Künstchen” in the Komponist’s aria from <em>Ariadne auf Naxos</em></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>End of the Komponist’s aria from <em>Ariadne auf Naxos</em></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wagner and Strauss, influenced by the orchestrations of earlier Romantic era composers, including Beethoven, as well as by the bel canto style of singing, wrote for the female voice in such a way that a non-standard classification, or Fach, emerged. This voice type has come to be known as the Zwischenfach. In the nineteenth century, when Wagner and Strauss were composing their operas, there was not a very clear distinction between the mezzo-soprano and the soprano voice. Singers, no matter their range, trained to sing long, legato passages as well as coloratura, and were taught to use more head voice in their singing. Wagner and his contemporaries began writing with larger orchestrations in mind. Because of the advances in orchestration and the addition of more resonant brass instruments, the style of singing had to be altered. A larger and louder orchestra led to the development of dramatic voices and advanced singing techniques. One of the most important examples of advanced singing techniques was the first high C sung in chest voice by a tenor. “Perhaps the most celebrated single note in the whole of history was the top C which the French tenor Gilbert-Louis Duprez [1806-1896] let fly in Rossini’s Guillaume Tell at the Paris Opéra in 1837.”¹ This new technique of singing, as we will see through the studies of specific works of Wagner and Strauss, also allowed a new dramatic voice type for the female to emerge – the Zwischenfach. (N.B. There is also the possibility of Zwischenfach for male voices, but this discussion will concentrate on

---

the female Zwischenfach.) This voice type, which essentially lies between the soprano and mezzo-soprano ranges, was used for dramatic roles lying in a specific tessitura.

The singers who influenced Wagner, and later Strauss, sang all types of operatic roles, spanning the ranges of both the soprano and mezzo-soprano. In fact, most of the women who sang the roles that will be discussed were considered sopranos at that time. However, they also had many mezzo-soprano roles in their repertoire. Why weren’t they categorized in a different way? The argument is that there are roles in specific tessituras with certain orchestrations that require a special voice. By looking at elements in these roles such as tessitura, range, vowel usage, and orchestration, one can argue the point that there should be a name for these unique singers.

Analysis of selected operatic works of Wagner and Strauss will answer the question about how and why the Zwischenfach emerged as a voice type, specifically in the roles of Adriano (Rienzi), Venus (Tannhäuser), Kundry (Parsifal), Octavian (Der Rosenkavalier), and the Komponist (Ariadne auf Naxos). This analysis will enlighten musicians and the public about the history, special characteristics, and functions of the Zwischenfach. I will analyze in these roles the vocal range, the tessitura, the orchestration, and the setting of the text in order to determine why these composers used certain compositional techniques to create the aforementioned roles. Because this topic has received only limited attention in the past, casting directors and voice teachers often do not understand this voice type as a specific, separate category. Today in the operatic world, female singers must classify themselves as soprano, mezzo-soprano, or contralto. However, there is no official distinction for a voice type that lies in between soprano and mezzo-soprano. One could argue that the Zwischenfach voice type should be its own
Fach and should be listed on résumés as well as on rosters of opera houses. As of now, it is not. It must be said that there are other composers who wrote roles in the Italian and French literature that are also considered Zwischenfach; however, in this paper, I will discuss how this category was heavily influenced by and grew out of the German school, focusing on these two composers and important singers of their works.

Through researching the singers who premiered and sang later performances of Wagner’s and Strauss’s operas, including Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, Marie Gutheil-Schoder, and Lotte Lehmann, I will determine if there are similarities in their voices and role choices, as well as their onstage personalities, that represent the expression of the Zwischenfach. In Wagner’s My Life, he speaks of Schröder-Devrient and her voice, temperament, and acting skill. I intend to explore the reasons why he chose her and why he wrote Adriano and Venus with her in mind. Lotte Lehmann writes of her experiences with the Strauss roles, singing both the mezzo and the soprano roles, both of which I would classify as the female Zwischenfach, and will explain this through my study of her voice and Strauss’s music. Gutheil-Schoder was the epitome of the Strauss Zwischenfach roles as the first intended Octavian. These singers sang in different time periods; therefore, I will analyze differences and developments in pedagogy and singing techniques that influenced Zwischenfach roles.

Historically these Wagnerian and Straussian singers were called sopranos, and the roles were also classified as such in the scores. Now these roles are most often sung by mezzo-sopranos, though most successfully by special mezzo-sopranos who have a certain power and color especially in the upper middle range. I will explain that certain roles by these composers should be considered as one coherent, separate voice type –
Zwischenfach. In Wagner in Performance, Desmond Shawe-Taylor begins to do this, tracing Wagner’s love of voices from the bel canto period.² My paper will trace the development of the Zwischenfach, or German dramatic mezzo-soprano, specifically from the works of Richard Wagner through the works of Richard Strauss. I will argue that Strauss’s works signified the pinnacle of the Zwischenfach and led other German composers to write for this voice type including Pfitzner, Hindemith, and Braunfels. These other composers will not be discussed in this paper.

The Zwischenfach as a female voice category has been long neglected: only a few have written about it. In fact, there is a lack of information, most likely due to lack of inquiry about how and why this voice type developed. Even in many of the vocal pedagogy texts currently in use, there is no category for Zwischenfach. Richard Miller in Training Soprano Voices and National Schools of Singing: English, French, German, and Italian Techniques of Singing Revisited mentions the Zwischenfach singer briefly, but only as an in-between category from which singers would eventually move on to a more dramatic Fach.³ He also says it is a type of soprano voice.⁴ William Vennard in Singing: the Mechanism and the Technic does not mention the Zwischenfach at all, nor does James McKinney in The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults.⁵,⁶ There have been a few papers, two of note, about the Zwischenfach voice. Elisabeth Harris’s dissertation “Zwischenfach: Paradox or Paradigm?” does not go into detail about the Zwischenfach;
she only argues that it is a paradox of two other voice types.⁷ She does not talk about the German or dramatic repertoire outside of the Komponist. Even then, the discussion of the Komponist makes this role seem like a lyric or full lyric mezzo role, which it is not. In her dissertation, Jennifer Allen says that it is a “flexible vocal category.”⁸ It is true that the Zwischenfach is currently viewed as flexible by pedagogues and peers in the opera business, as certain roles are considered both mezzo-soprano and soprano. However, I will go further by using the music of Wagner and Strauss as illustrations of my thesis that it is not flexible and is a specific voice category, demonstrating a specific tessitura and vocal color in relationship to the orchestration.

In addition, Jennifer Allen makes a bold and unsubstantiated assumption that Wagner “led many singers to vocal fatigue and abuse,” with which I strongly disagree.⁹ Her bibliography is limited. There is no evidence that the singers of Wagner’s time or successful singers through the present have ruined their voices. Strauss’s vocal music is different from Wagner’s, as the orchestrations are at times lighter, and the vocal lines are not as long, and Allen does not mention Strauss’s music nor vocal health in singers of Strauss’s music. When one is singing correctly, and in the correct range and tessitura for one’s instrument, the instrumentation and length of phrase should not make a difference to the technique of singing. I will explore range, passaggi, and tessitura in order to support my claim that this voice type is an important classification for singers of today.

---

⁹ Ibid., 21.
The scope of my paper will include an investigation of five roles for the female voice in operas by Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss (Rienzi, Tannhäuser, Parsifal, Der Rosenkavalier, and Ariadne auf Naxos), which voice experts now sometimes refer to as Zwischenfach. My investigation will examine orchestral scores, vocal scores, manuscripts, and biographical information, as well as various analyses of the aforementioned works. In order to explain how these roles help to define the designation Zwischenfach, I will also use vocal pedagogy texts to support my findings, as well as to determine how the term was invented and used, both in the past and present. I will study the singers who premiered the roles, as well as various singers since then who have sung them. From there, I will examine methods and expectations of singing in the times directly preceding Wagner through his own time of composition followed by that of Strauss and how singing has changed, bringing us to the present day and why the Zwischenfach should now be considered a legitimate voice type. I will also study the libretti in relation to the setting of the text to music. I will analyze the melodies in relation to tessitura and the libretti to determine why they wrote for the voice in this manner. Wagner’s and Strauss’s vast correspondences with their friends and librettists also shed light on their operatic compositional techniques. This paper covers aspects of the disciplines of music theory, history, and vocal pedagogy, explored through these two composers and five of their works.
2.1 DEFINITION OF FACH

The word *Fach* means “compartment or pigeonhole.”

In terms of singing, it is the categorization of voice type. According to Richard Miller in *Training Soprano Voices*, “range and tessitura capabilities are of less importance to professional *Fach* designation than are individual voice color and the requirements of dramatic portrayal.”

Often voice pedagogues classify a voice based on its dark or light voice color, especially with young singers. One mistake is to immediately assume that a dark color means a lower voice type, and vice versa. Voice color and dramatic portrayal are certainly important. In addition to voice color, which also can be referred to as voice quality or timbre, vocal registration is an important factor in determining voice type, or *Fach*.

“Voice quality consists of two elements: (1) the complexities of the manner in which the vocal folds vibrate (the particular intensities of each of the harmonic overtones in the overall sound wave produced), and (2) the coupling effect of the vocal tract (the way it is positioned to reinforce the particular harmonic structure produced at any given moment).”

Timbre can be changed depending on the shape of the vocal tract. For young singers, timbre should not be used as the most important way to determine *Fach*. Because the vocal tract can be manipulated to make darker or brighter sounds, timbre can be

---


altered. Young singers may change their timbre unknowingly by lack of technique and altering the vocal tract by different positions of the soft palate, larynx, and tongue. In addition, vowels can also be changed. “Thus, the adaptation of the vocal tract allows the production of differences in vowel coloration.”¹³ As the singer learns breathing technique and how to allow the vocal tract to be in its optimal position for various parts of the range, then the true timbre can be heard and possibly can help to determine Fach.

“Registers are laryngeally based [but] they are also frequency dependent.”¹⁴ The mainstream Fächer (i.e. lyric mezzo-soprano, lyric soprano, dramatic soprano, etc.) have been studied to determine registration and timbre. The Zwischenfach voice works slightly differently as the registration breaks in the voice are different from a standard soprano or mezzo-soprano. Richard Miller shows in a table (Table 1) that the secondo passaggio for soprano is between F#5 and G5, and the mezzo-soprano is between E5 to F5, and the contralto is from D5 to E♭5.¹⁵ Nowhere in this table does it give the possibility for variation of registration changes. For a dramatic soprano, the secondo passaggio may in fact be closer to a mezzo-soprano. From Miller’s Figure 2.8, I argue that the secondo passaggio for the Zwischenfach is lower than the stated mezzo-soprano secondo passaggio and that it is from E♭5 to E5 (Table 2). The dramatic soprano’s passaggio is lower than the lyric’s; therefore, the passaggio of the Zwischenfach (a type of dramatic mezzo-soprano) is lower than that of the lyric mezzo-soprano. Further evidence to support this lower secondo passaggio is that the power and intensity of the Zwischenfach

¹⁴ Ibid., 29.
voice occurs at F5 and F#5. One must sing above the *passaggio* for the intensity of sound to occur. As we will see in the study of the roles of Wagner and Strauss, these two composers knew that there was a certain voice that had certain intensities in the upper middle range.

Table 1. Register Breaks based on Richard Miller’s *Training Soprano Voices*\(^{16}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower (primo) <em>passaggio</em></th>
<th>Upper (secolo) <em>passaggio</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td>E♭4</td>
<td>F#5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo-soprano</td>
<td>E4/F4</td>
<td>E5/F5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contralto</td>
<td>G4/A♭4</td>
<td>D5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Additional Register Breaks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower (primo) <em>passaggio</em></th>
<th>Upper (secolo) <em>passaggio</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td>E♭4</td>
<td>F#5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Soprano</td>
<td>E4</td>
<td>E5/F5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo-soprano</td>
<td>E4/F4</td>
<td>E5/F5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zwischenfach</td>
<td>F4/F#4</td>
<td>E♭5/E5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contralto</td>
<td>G4/A♭4</td>
<td>D5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 DEFINITION OF ZWISCHENFACH

The Zwischenfach has always had the ambiguous definition and direct translation from German of “in-between.” Both Miller and Lamperti do not have an exact definition of a mezzo-soprano, a dramatic soprano, or a Zwischenfach singer. Richard Miller states:

The Zwischenfachsängerin has a large voice with good command of low range and is most comfortable in dramatic roles that, while requiring relatively high tessitura, evade exposure of the very top of the voice for extended periods of time. She is ‘between categories’...Possessing the weight and color of the dramatic soprano, she can manage much of the same literature as the dramatic, but her most comfortable performance range is closer to that of a mezzo-soprano.17

According to the younger Lamperti (1839-1910) as quoted in Coffin’s Historical Vocal Pedagogy Classics, “The Mezzo-Soprano, also called Dramatic Soprano, is a less flexible voice with developed chest register and medium compass.”18

In her dissertation on Fach, Sandra Cotton translates Kloiber’s definition of a dramatic mezzo-soprano from his Handbuch der Oper as “Range of G3 – B♭5 or C6; agile, metallic ‘zwischenfach’ voice of a dark color, which often develops later into the highly dramatic Fach; good high notes.”19 Kloiber, rather than considering the dramatic mezzo as its own Fach, describes it as an in-between Fach. It is interesting that many people sing the Zwischenfach roles throughout their careers and do not necessarily become dramatic sopranos, nor anything other than an actual Zwischenfach. Tatiana Troyanos and Christa Ludwig are good examples of Zwischenfach singers in the German repertoire. They were known for the roles discussed in this paper, including Venus in

19 Sandra Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach: Recent, Historical, and Conflicting Systems of Voice Categorization” (Doctoral diss., The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2007), 60.
Tannhäuser, Kundry in Parsifal, Octavian in Der Rosenkavalier, and the Komponist in Ariadne auf Naxos. Additionally, they sang many other roles both in the mezzo-soprano and soprano Fächer; both sang Brangäne in Tristan und Isolde, Ludwig sang Ortrud in Lohengrin, and Leonore in Fidelio, and Troyanos sang Fricka and Waltraute in Der Ring des Nibelungen, as well as many other roles in the mezzo-soprano repertoire. Cotton also cites Richard Boldrey’s Guide to Operatic Roles and Arias which states that “the term Zwischenfach, for example, acknowledges the literal meaning of a voice type that “cannot be classified precisely in one Fach or another,” yet notes that “it is commonly understood to refer to that shadowland between soprano and mezzo-soprano.”

Zwischenfach is not a shadowland. It is its own distinctive category, as will be shown in the studies of five specific Wagner and Strauss roles. These five roles are written specifically for the voice described above, not an in-between transient voice. Jennifer Allen states that “Kloiber notes that the heroic (dramatic) voice arose with the advent of Wagner’s music and contrasted sharply with the lyrical voice.” Wagner’s singers marked the beginning of a new vocal category, which through the present day has yet to be precisely defined.

“Zwischenfach came out of developing laws of dramatic music and leaving behind Italian meaninglessness.” Using Wagner’s music, and Strauss’s following in the same fashion, it is now time to define this voice category as a dramatic voice with a high tessitura, yet with a large range including extremely low and high notes, with interesting, dramatic characters, including Romantic trouser roles.

The five roles studied in this paper all have similar ranges and, more importantly, tessitura. Most of them have ranges that go as low as G#3 or A3, and as high as B♭5 or B5 at the most dramatic points in the score. A distinguishing characteristic of the Zwischenfach singer is that the tessitura is relatively high, often between E5-G5, which is the secondo passaggio for many sopranos. The Zwischenfach tessitura never stretches to the highest notes of the female singer’s range, such as C6 or D♭6, as happens in many soprano roles.

Compared to the lyric mezzo-soprano, or even the dramatic mezzo-soprano in the Italian Fach, the tessitura of German roles is where the big differences lie. The lyric mezzo-soprano tessitura generally sits in a lower range, most often below the secondo passaggio. The mezzo-soprano roles of Mozart are quite different from these German roles; the tessitura of Mozart’s roles lies on the staff for the most part, with the higher notes being mainly E♭5 and sometimes F5. The tessitura of the German roles to be discussed is F5 and F#5. For the Verdi roles, the roles go below the staff more often, though with some high notes. However, the tessitura lies very much in the middle voice. These Italian dramatic mezzo-soprano roles such as Azucena in Il trovatore or Eboli in Don Carlo must sing high notes, but the roles also sit generally lower, and they must sustain low notes. Though the ranges are similar for the German and Italian dramatic mezzo-soprano, the tessitura is much higher for the German singer. There are also roles in the French repertoire which will not be discussed such as Didon and Cassandre from Berlioz’s Les Troyens, which would both be Zwischenfach roles with high tessituras similar to the German roles. It is not surprising that the Zwischenfach is evident in the French repertoire; the German and French composers were great influences on each
other. Based on the fact that the majority of the Zwischenfach roles are found in the
German repertoire (or influenced by it), one could say that the Zwischenfach is a German
dramatic mezzo-soprano. The distinctive characteristics of the high tessitura and the large
range support the point that the Zwischenfach should be its own category.
CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEZZO-SOPRANO FROM THE ERA OF THE CASTRATI

3.1 FEMALE VOICES BEFORE 1840

The female voice before the 1840s was distinguished as soprano or contralto. The mezzo-soprano was not considered its own Fach at this time. This categorization of the female voice came out of the time of the castrati and male sopranos, when most roles were sung by male singers. Farinelli was one of the most famous castrati in the 1700s, whom “we can define...today as a high male mezzo-soprano...whose voice combined the deep contralto and the high soprano.”23 The pants role did not exist until after the castrati went out of favor and women took over their roles. One of the first women to sing the male role of Arsamene by Händel was “played en travestie by Antonia Marchesini, known as La Lucchesina (a dark-voiced soprano, actually a mezzo-soprano).”24 She was known as a soprano, but this was before the distinction of mezzo-soprano existed. After Händel and in the time of Mozart, the pants roles were categorized as soprano, not mezzo-soprano.

Rossini was one of the first composers to bring the contralto, and eventually mezzo-soprano, into the forefront of female leading roles. Rossini composed at the height of the age of bel canto, a period defined by the importance of the beauty and virtuosity of the voice, rather than the expression of the text. As Bellini and Donizetti followed in Rossini’s bel canto tradition, they too were interested in beautiful singing. However, they

24 Ibid., 102.
were influenced by the Romantic style, which placed importance on expressing words and emotions through the music.

The Romantics’ aesthetics and storylines were more dramatic. Audiences of this time expected more drama with regard to music and text, and more acting on the operatic stage. “The gradual emancipation of the seria and buffa genres in the writing of Rossini, Meyerbeer, Bellini and Donizetti gave singers more opportunities to impress as actors while continuing to astonish audiences with their virtuosity.”  

As these composers were serious influences on Wagner, the addition of acting and drama to beautiful singing is what he expected from the singers who would sing his music. This Romantic style and compositional time period was the beginning of the development of the dramatic voice, which not only included the beauty of the voice, but also the drama with regard to sound and to text expression. Studying these earlier composers and styles of singing helps one to understand the impetus for the development of a more dramatic style in singing, and music in general.

3.2 EARLY VOCAL PEDAGOGIES

Equally important as the compositional style of vocal music was the style in which singers were trained to sing. Studying the early schools of singing and the age of the virtuoso, beginning with Mancini around 1777 through Garcia II in the 1840s, brings us to a better understanding of how singers in Wagner’s and Strauss’s time learned to sing.  

In the days of the castrati and the vocal virtuosi, composers such as Scarlatti and

---

Händel composed specifically for the singers who would premiere their pieces. As the age of the virtuoso was coming to an end, composers were more general in their compositional style and not writing for specific singers. Vocal training continued to inform composers of vocal capabilities.

Presently, we can study the texts of the early singing teachers. “For a modern singer, well-supported and controlled breathing is fundamental to a sound technique; for an eighteenth-century singer the mastery of messa di voce (Appendix A) enabled precisely that.”27 In order to master the messa di voce, singers need to unify their registers:

From the start the singer would be aware of having two overlapping registers, called voce di petto or chest voice and voce di testa, a term translated as head voice or falsetto. A key element in all singing is the unifying of these two dispositions of the voice. Tosi says the singer should:

Unite the feigned and the natural voice, that they may not be distinguished; for if they do not perfectly unite, the voice will be of diverse registers, and must consequently lose its beauty.28

Mancini confirms this:

The great art of the singer consists in acquiring the ability to render imperceptibly to the ear, the passing from the one register to the other. In other words, to unite the two, so as to have perfect quality of voice throughout the whole range, each tone being on a level with your best and purest tone.29

---

28 Ibid., 95.
29 Ibid.
Surveying the singers of the *bel canto* period, one can see a trend of expanding vocal range. There were several singers who would now be called mezzo-sopranos, or even possibly *Zwischenfach*, depending on other music they may have sung. One strong example of this is Giuditta Pasta (1797-1865):

“Although she always sang soprano roles, accounts of Pasta’s range suggest that she may have been a mezzo who also had top notes. This may offer a clue both to the dramatic intensity of her singing and her relatively early retirement: projecting a low voice higher can access a wider range of tone colours, but the tension created by routinely singing outside her comfortable tessitura would in the end have tired her musculature beyond help.”

Pauline Viardot (1821-1910) was also known as a tour de force of singing. “A similar fate may have befallen Pauline Viardot, also a mezzo who retired early, and like Pasta a new breed of thinking singer.” These two singers, especially Viardot who was also a composer, helped bring the mezzo-soprano *Fach* into the standard operatic repertoire. “She [Viardot] had close working relationships with Gounod, Berlioz, and Massenet, and became a pivotal figure in the evolution of the mezzo-soprano.”

A third example is Viardot’s sister, Maria Malibran (1808-1836). “Malibran had had a tough schooling at the hands of her father, and had hardened into a tenacious and ‘fearlessly original’ mezzo-soprano with a compass of more than two and half octaves….the end of the castrati did not mean the end of creative extravagance.”

---

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 114.
33 Ibid., 119.
dramatic singing, Malibran was singing with virtuosic style. One could go further and say that all of these women were the forerunners of the Zwiachenfach.

3.3 FEMALE VOICES IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD: NEW PEDAGOGIES

Changes in singing technique went hand in hand with the compositional styles and the aesthetics of the Romantic period. “Despite changes in voices and compositional styles many aspects of singing teaching continued to be much the same as they had been for generations, but applied with more rigour.”

It should be said that “…new singing (or singings, perhaps) did not immediately replace the old, but existed alongside it or many years; it also featured many of the same characteristics, changing only in certain very specific areas.”

Those specific areas were advances in breath support, increased resonance, and most importantly, the lowered larynx.

Manuel Garcia II (1805-1906), the son of the great pedagogue Manuel Garcia I (1775-1832), was one of the pedagogues at the forefront of the new vocal technique. He painted a picture of singing in the 1840s with his treatises, including Traité complet de l’art du chant, and how his ideas incorporated many of the traditions of earlier singing masters including Tosi and Mancini. Along with his sisters Viardot and Malibran, Garcia II was taught by their father, Manuel Garcia I. Garcia II, with his knowledge and interest in the vocal mechanism, made advances in the teaching of vocal technique. “Both Garaudé and Garcia discuss a new and more powerful way of singing that involves lowering the larynx, a technique that may have assisted Gilbert-Louis Duprez on his way

---

35 Ibid., 121.
to his famous top C, the *ut de poitrine*...he [Garaudé] says Garcia (*père*) and Rubini can mix it effectively (*sombre mixte*) but others risk loss of agility, tiredness, and permanent damage. He considers it more violent than the ‘natural voice’ and advises singers to steer clear of it.”

The younger Garcia understood that there was a more efficient way to sing and to use the voice as a better instrument. Potter and Sorrell explain:

> He [Garcia] understands the basic acoustic phenomena and he realizes that the low larynx position somehow leads to increased vocal efficiency...accessing a much wider range of tone colours. In essence what Garcia is talking about is the basis of modern classical singing. Modern science can now account for his astonishment at the gains in acoustic efficiency: we now know that by increasing the length of the vocal tract singers gain access to extra resonance. The acoustic space in the pharynx contains a number of formants which in effect multiply the frequencies and create resonance; the so-called singer’s formant is an extra resonance in a frequency range which enables voices to carry over a symphony orchestra with no extra effort.  

Garcia II was the first to explain singing and the singer’s formant without using that terminology or the science behind it. However, he understood acoustics and was able to train his singers to create sounds that could project over the orchestra well. Because the singers were singing in a more powerful manner, it opened the doors for the Romantic composers with their larger orchestrations.

In 1840, the laryngoscope was invented by the younger Garcia. This new invention impacted singers, pedagogues, and scientists. It was the beginning of developing new techniques of singing as well as teaching. At the same time that new singing techniques were being developed, instruments were going through major

---

37 Ibid., 127-8.
innovations, which in turn changed their sounds. The combination of these advancements would change singing and opera as the art forms progressed into the Romantic period.

Garcia II, in his treatise Mémoire sur la voix humaine (1841), discusses the clair (clear) and sombre (dark) timbres of the voice. He says that “when the tones between e1 and b1 [modern day E4 to B4] are given somber timbre they acquire dramatic character in both men and women.”

Now that the somber character is allowed in singing technique, it allows for more dramatic singing. “Garcia states that in somber timbre the larynx is fixed in the lower position…Garcia notes that when clear and somber timbres are alternated, the larynx rises for the clear, and lowers for the sombre.”

Timbres must be attached to a sound, and vocal sound is in the form of vowels. “Vowels can be used to attain these formations for the colors of the voice: the open vowels [a], [ɛ], [ɔ] as in Italian, are modification of clear timbre. The close vowels [e], [o], as in Italian as well as the vowel [u], are modifications of the sombre timbre. Garcia states that the vowel [i], not having any character of its own, can receive the two timbres equally.”

In addition to the sombre timbre having a deepening effect on the voice and the ability to make it sound more dramatic, “the somber timbre in the head voice has a remarkable effect of making the tone pure and limpid.” The sombre effect in both the head and lower register assists resonance which is important in projecting voices over large orchestras and more resonant instruments.

---

39 Ibid., 22-23.
40 Ibid., 23.
41 Ibid., 22.
4.1 WAGNER

In Wagner’s own writings, it is clear that he wanted his singers well-trained rather than screaming or shouting over orchestras. “He [Wagner] continued to advocate traditional vocal technique and meticulous attention to its expression.”\(^{42}\) Wagner was a true advocate for the voice and for the singer. “The importance Wagner attached to beautiful, well-trained voices meant that if forced to choose between a singer of intelligence and poor voice and one of less intelligence but better voice he would be inclined to pick the latter.”\(^{43}\) The voice was considered an equal instrument in Wagner’s orchestra; therefore, it had to be of good quality and technique. The German singers who sang in the German style during Wagner’s time resorted to declamatory singing, which he did not advocate. He preferred those with Italianate training. In *Oper und Drama*, Wagner speaks to the difficulties of singing the German language in a truly *bel canto* way, as “the Italian ‘canto’ is inexecutable in this language.”\(^{44}\) His new “compulsorily simple plan was to make him really and distinctly speak in singing, whilst I brought the lines of musical curvature (*die Linien der Gesangsbewegung*) to his consciousness by getting him to take in one breath, with perfectly even intonation, the calmer, lengthier periods on which he formerly had expended a number of gusty inspirations.”\(^{45}\) In other

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 137.
\(^{45}\) Ibid.
words, he sought to find a more effective and beautiful style of singing through musical phrasing and use of language and breath, essentially creating a new school of singing. Because of the differences in consonants and vowels in the German language from those in the Italian language, he wanted to develop a system for German bel canto. He said, “Our singers do not articulate properly,” meaning they either did not enunciate the words or they “have sung quite ‘dramatically,’” by over-articulating the consonants, disturbing the vocal line.46 He expected the well-sung lines of the Italian bel canto to be combined with the expression of the German language. Schröder-Devrient was his muse in this case; she was a “German in a debate between German and Italian style.”47

To Wagner, the vowel was the most important aspect of the language with regard to the voice as an instrument. Vowels are what create a sustainable sound, as “the vowel itself is nothing but a condensed tone.”48 The sung vowels create the quality of sound that becomes part of the orchestral timbre. “The slippage between enunciated vowel and musical tone is the crucial bridge along which Wagner blends the ostensibly separate sonorities of music and poetry into a unified mode of melodic expression.”49 Unlike Strauss’s idea that consonants carried one’s voice over an orchestra and made oneself understood, “root vowels [Appendix A] outrank consonants in Wagner’s hierarchy of expressivity.”50

In addition to his use of the German language in singing, Wagner was also interested in the methods of singing that kept voices in top form. Much of the music of

48 Ibid., 299.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
the past required agility; therefore, vocal technique at that time included agility training, though it was becoming less common. “Wagner himself and Rossini before him still considered agility training essential if singers were to have complete control of their voices.”  

Along with Wagner, Duprez, in his treatise “L’Art du Chant” in 1846, agreed that “agility is still important.”

Another method of singing that kept voices healthy was the use of the *portamento*, a technique that requires the breath to carry the tone from one pitch to the next. During Wagner’s time, agility training and *portamenti* were not used as commonly as they had been during the *bel canto* period. To ensure their usage, “Wagner occasionally indicated both vibrato and portamento and these would mean in addition to what would come naturally to the singers.” The lack of instinctive *portamento* usage marked the time when singing started to take a turn for the more dramatic. “Although both portamento and agility are still dealt with in most treatises, we can detect an increasing ambivalence towards portamento as well as the usual hostility to excessive ornaments. But these are only two of the symptoms of change that overtook many aspects of singing during the century.” Singing only occasionally with *portamenti* and agility caused singers to sing with a heavier mechanism, creating what became known after Wagner’s death as the “Bayreuth Bark.” Perhaps as a reaction to these changes in singing habits, Jennifer Allen points out that Wagner was responsible for thicker orchestrations and long vocal lines which “made extreme demands on the performers.”

---

52 Ibid., 129.
53 Ibid., 140.
54 Ibid., 130.
55 Ibid., 139.
inferring that singing this music was potentially dangerous.\textsuperscript{56} The music itself is not in fact dangerous, though the new methods of singing perhaps were. By demanding the use of a solid vocal technique including agility and \textit{portamento} in his scores, Wagner helps to illustrate that “it is in such matters of control and pacing that the real challenge lies, rather than the misconception that Wagner’s orchestra is too loud for his singers.”\textsuperscript{57}

There were two other factors that affected the voice in Wagner’s time: pitch and the materials with which instruments were constructed. “Throughout Wagner’s lifetime pitch was getting progressively higher in most places…By 1861, the pitch at the Opera [Dresden] was recorded as $a^1 = 446$. Wagner insisted on keeping it closer to the French at 435.”\textsuperscript{58} The lower pitch would have also slightly affected the singers, and for the highest notes for the \textit{Zwischenfach} singer, made them easier to sing because they were slightly lower. In addition, “the strings were made from gut strings, not metal covered strings, so the sound was quite different from the strings.”\textsuperscript{59} These gut strings made the sound and resonance of the strings not as loud or resonant as in the present day. Singers could more easily be heard over the sound of this type of string instrument. The brass instruments were being further developed, some even invented by Wagner himself, and were constructed with valves rather than as natural horns. The valves gave more flexibility to the instruments and allowed for exact pitches to be played as well as an extended range. The brass instruments were new competition for the voice. However, Wagner and Strauss knew the timbres and capabilities of these instruments and how to use them to

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
complement the voice. The Zwischenfach voice could easily sing with these instruments, as the combination of resonances with the horn, for example, created an orchestral color which highlighted both the combination of sound and the individual colors of instrument and voice.

Wagner had a very specific idea of what he thought the voice should be. He expected singers to sing in the finest tradition of the bel canto period. In his article “Pasticcio” (1834), “he raised questions about the Germanic style of singing and shuddered at the lack of a true ‘training school for higher vocal culture.’”\(^{60}\) He felt that there was no true national opera form and wished to change this lack of national musical voice. Through the use of different instruments in the orchestra in combination with the voice, Wagner attempted to create a German national form. In doing so, Wagner “tried to imitate the Germanic style of Mozart, Beethoven, and Weber.”\(^{61}\) In addition to emulating these earlier German composers, he also looked to the Italians and French Grand Opera, such as he did in Rienzi. He went ‘from Rienzi to “channeling into the bed of music-drama the great stream which Beethoven sent pouring into German music.”’\(^{62}\) Wagner wished to have drama and music be equal in his “Art of the Future” aesthetic, though he could not say which was more important. Aberbach quotes him saying, “‘the course I am now embarked upon is that of a musician who, setting out from a convinced belief in the most inexhaustible riches of music, wishes to create the highest of all art forms, namely

---


\(^{61}\) Ibid., 335.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 338.
Wagner also explained that “music ‘must neither stand before nor behind the drama: she is no rival, but its mother.’”

In order to create the German national sound in opera, strong singers were needed. In 1834, Wagner described the lack of German non-symphonic music and lack of singing schools. Aberbach explores the use of the voice, and continues with Wagner’s own words:

German folk and German composers must begin to look at the voice – not as an instrument in the orchestra – but as an adjunct to the orchestra which required a new musical form. But singers must be trained: ‘Where, in all our German fatherland, are there training schools for higher vocal culture?’ Lamenting the inability of Germans to sing correctly, Wagner urged that this defect be remedied in order to create ‘not only a well-trained organ, but also a good delivery, correct declamation, pure enunciation, sympathetic expression and thorough knowledge of music.’

Instruments in the orchestra were equally important as the voice to Wagner, and often expressed the underlying emotions of the characters. However, “‘the genius of the voice is completely different: this represents the human heart, the separate individual sensibility, limited but clear and definite.’” One can see the importance of the human voice to the music of Wagner since he wrote no other music solely for instruments after he began writing opera. “Music became more meaningful when it was combined with the human voice. The combination was the link between the physical and spiritual worlds.” Wagner thought that instruments were primal and made sounds that were from before humans were on earth. He thought that “…the voice, would have a beneficial effect upon

---

64 Ibid., 341.
65 Ibid., 402.
66 Ibid., 343.
67 Ibid.
the instruments’ expression of the struggle of primal feeling.’”\textsuperscript{68} The idea that voice and instruments were both important led Wagner to “create an innovative art form in which the voice could express the serious elements of drama while music would establish the psychological and spatial characteristics.”\textsuperscript{69} Wagner also knew that audiences coming to see opera were there to hear voices. “As Wagner knew, ‘the singer’s voice – its kind and quality – is the public’s main concern.’”\textsuperscript{70} He believed in the voice, but he also wanted the audiences to understand fully what was to be portrayed. “Since the words were so crucial, the audience must clearly hear and understand them; otherwise, they would never appreciate the proper relationship between words and music.”\textsuperscript{71} With regard to vowels and the range in which he wrote, the important relationship of words and music will be discussed in the analysis of the works in Chapter 5.

Wagner’s rehearsals were run differently than they had been in the past, and certainly differently than the way the Italians, who were only interested in the voice, would have run them. “The ‘so-called vocal-rehearsals should not begin until the players have become acquainted with the poem itself, in its whole extent and context.’”\textsuperscript{72} An important point is that in the past, “opera singers traditionally gave only scant attention to the text, making opera performances, according to Wagner, dull, and even worse poor theater: ‘Mere ‘singers’ have never been any use to me. I want good actresses who can sing, and while I cannot get them, the performance of my works will always be only a shadow.’”\textsuperscript{73} He also thought that the orchestrations should not overpower a singer. ““It

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 344.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 347.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 348.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 349.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
must be the conductor’s duty, to see to it that the desired effect be made possible to the chief performer through the most discreet accompaniment, on part alike of the other singers and the orchestra.”  

In many of his works, Wagner used the recitative. However, he said that he never wanted the word recitative to be placed in the score. With regard to his operas from Tannhäuser on, Wagner said, “Nowhere in my score of Lohengrin have I put the word ‘recitative’ over a vocal phrase – the singers are not to know that there are recitatives in it.” He said this because he wanted the music and drama to be equal and for the music to continue forward, as opposed to the bel canto technique of recitative followed by cavatina. Recitative, which drives stories forward, forces the singer to be not only a singer, but a “singing-actor…‘For all that the German singing-actor (as I may call him) requires, besides recovery of his scandalously neglected naturalism in speaking, as in singing, lies solely on the mental plane.’” Because Wagner wanted stories and dramas told to audiences, “the singer and the orchestra would both play a novel role in music-drama. The singer ‘is a human being artistically representing human beings and the artistic outpours of his feeling are ordered by the highest necessity of transforming a thought into man.’” The orchestra and singer are of equal importance, and could be used to enhance and support each other. “The orchestra supports the singer to ‘vindicate the inner sphere of musical harmony.’ It has ‘the faculty of uttering the unspeakable.’”

---

75 Ibid., 353.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., 367.
78 Ibid.
In order to enhance the use of the voice and orchestra in his music, Wagner built his own new theater. The orchestra was placed under the stage, yet the conductor could still be seen by the singers. “The hidden orchestra focuses no attention on either the players or the conductor, thereby heightening the dramatic ambience.”79 Because the orchestra was hidden, Wagner could then concentrate fully on the text and orchestral colors. “Wagner personally selected and instructed each singer and member of the orchestra. Concerned with clarity, he told them that ‘the long notes will take care of themselves; the small notes and their text is what matters.’”80 He also said that, “‘in articulation and in characterization everything must appear authentic and natural.’”81 Wagner built the orchestra pit under the stage because he knew that voices must never be overpowered by the orchestra. “The players should ‘support the singer as the sea does a boat, rocking but never upsetting or swamping.’”82

Voices, orchestra, and Wagner’s innovative theater design were all important factors in the development of the Zwischenfach. The orchestra itself was growing and Wagner invented instruments for his orchestra. He also understood that vocal lines must be composed in certain registers so that words could be understood in order for the drama onstage to make sense. An important “shift in conception of melodic and speech sound in Wagner’s writings around the 1848 revolution, a shift, that is, between aesthetics and acoustics” occurred.83 This shift of acoustics also helped to shape the roles that he composed, and further, developed the Zwischenfach voice. Kundry is an example of a

---

80 Ibid., 391.
81 Ibid., 395.
82 Ibid., 398.
later acoustic shift. In the role, he not only uses the voice for singing, but for moaning, laughing, and screaming. Additionally, Wagner in all of his music was constantly “absorbing melody into the orchestral texture as orchestral speech while the voice utters words in the direct narrative through tonally inflected pitches.”

Why is the equal importance of music and drama, as well as good singing, important to the Zwischenfach? Wagner chose the most dramatic of roles for the female voice for his Zwischenfach ladies – Venus, Ortrud, Kundry, and even Brünnhilde. He wanted not only strength of voice and melody, but the drama of the words and action to be at the forefront of a performance. Unlike the singers in the bel canto era, “in the future singers would be known for the skill with which they characterized their roles rather than merely for their ability to get around the notes.” Wagner stated, “‘the human voice, a far nobler and more beautiful organ than any orchestra instrument, is there a fact of life. Why should it be handled any less independently? What new results might not be achieved? Develop the very thing which sets the voice apart and you throw open fresh possibilities of combination.’”

4.2 STRAUSS

Richard Strauss was an admitted Wagnerite, in contrast to his father who was anti-Wagnerian yet played French horn in Wagner’s orchestras. Wagner and Strauss had similar influences, including Auber and his La muette de Portici, Weber and his Der
Freischütz, and Mozart and his operas.\textsuperscript{87} Strauss was “generally regarded as a very good Mozartian and Wagnerian conductor,” which meant that he knew these composers very well and used some of their compositional techniques and influences in his own music.\textsuperscript{88} Also, much like Wagner, he was greatly influenced by Beethoven. “Strauss’s views on form, poetic idea, and the relationship between the two” were discussed in a letter to von Bülow in 1888. In this letter, Strauss writes that it is Beethoven who was the master of combining poetic idea and music, with which his friend Wagner would agree.\textsuperscript{89} “Strauss, was a composer who, like his great model Richard Wagner, wanted his audiences to understand his music.”\textsuperscript{90} Unlike Wagner, however, the key to Strauss’s compositional practice was his invention and use of melodies. Wagner is more known for leitmotifs and for harmony. Strauss wrote beautiful melodies, which also became leitmotifs. Strauss was concerned with the poetic ideas of his works as well as the melodies and the compositional process. What differed from Wagner is that he did not use his own texts. He worked closely with his librettists, especially Hofmannsthal. In addition to carefully composing melodies, he “applied ‘the greatest of care…in the choice of keys.’”\textsuperscript{91} In his writings, he mentions melody and harmony, but nothing about orchestral color.\textsuperscript{92} Unlike Wagner who quickly wrote orchestral sketches after preliminary sketches, Strauss had four stages for composing his operas which he describes as “intensive study of the libretto; drafting of musical sketches; linking the sketches together in a particell (a term

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 264.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
that, for brevity’s sake, I will use instead of piano score); and finally, the writing of the orchestra score.”

Strauss learned to write for the voice by composing songs. His aunt, mezzo-soprano Johanna Pschorr (1838-1918), was an early vocal influence in his understanding of the voice and use of melody, vowels, and consonants. He wrote many of his earliest Lieder for her. Her lower voice (as compared to sopranos) could have had an influence on his writing for the Zwischenfach voice. She sang the music of Wagner, and therefore Strauss also probably had the sounds of Wagner’s Zwischenfach music in his ear while composing. He was infatuated with Brahms (Brahmsschwärmerei). This could have helped him understand the slightly lower voice as well. Brahms also created long, beautiful melodic lines with good prosody.

Compared to the many songs that Strauss composed, Wagner only wrote a handful. Strauss used songs to experiment with melody. Wagner was not Strauss’s equal as a melodist and imagined vocal music not as a song with accompaniment, but as a whole musical picture. “When Strauss sketched songs, he focused completely on the vocal part, usually with the complete text added…Again, the melody dominates.”

Unlike Wagner, Strauss truly thought of the voice as the most important. In the operas Strauss would write, the vocal melody is showcased. “It is in Richard Wagner’s works that we find the ideal relationship between vocal parts and orchestra.” This is a statement more relating to orchestration than melody, but one can see that Strauss

---

94 Ibid., 44.
95 Ibid., 50.
96 Ibid., 34.
admired Wagner greatly. “Although Strauss identified himself as a Wagnerian, this adherence became limited to musical style and principles: a huge, colorful, polyphonic, and dominant orchestra; an intricate web of leitmotifs; chromaticism; and placing drama above purely musical concerns. Aesthetically, however, Strauss progressed from pseudo-Wagnerian to anti-Wagnerian during the 1890s.”98 Though Strauss preferred the old Italian theater to Bayreuth, because there the orchestra was lost under the stage, his earliest idea on orchestration was like that of Wagner in that “the orchestra must consist of eighty to one hundred players; 16 first and 16 second violins, 12 violas, 12 celli and 8 double basses.”99 Because of Wagner’s and Strauss’s differing and similar use of the voice as a color within an orchestra, the orchestration is extremely important to the Zwischenfach, and any voice for which these two composers would write.

Along with the use of melody in his songs, text was also an important factor. It is interesting to note “Strauss’s belief that poetry at its most superlative had no need of music.”100 On the contrary, one of Strauss’s idols, Goethe, defined “vocal music (Vokalmusik) as singing in which one only hears the vowels.”101 This statement was used as a joke by conductors when singers did not use their consonants as well. Diction was extremely important to Strauss as a composer and as a conductor. “I have always paid the greatest possible attention to natural diction and speed of dialogue, with increasing success from opera to opera.”102 He says that the dialogue however was not absolutely

101 Ibid.
clear, due to his faults, or “the imperfect diction on the part of the majority of our operatic singers, or again to the unfortunately often guttural tone of the German singers, or to the excessive forcing of sound on our big stages.”

His thoughts on diction continue from vowels to consonants:

The singer in particular should remember that only a properly formed consonant will penetrate even the most brutal of orchestras, whereas the strongest note of the human voice, even when singing the best vowel ‘ah’, will be drowned without difficulty by an orchestra of eighty or a hundred players playing no louder than mezzo forte. The singer has only one weapon against a polyphonic and indiscreet orchestra: the consonant. I have myself seen it happen…that singers with great voices but poor diction were left to flounder impotently in the waves of orchestra sound, whereas singers with considerably weaker voices but decisive pronunciation of consonants could carry the poet’s words victoriously and without the slightest difficulty against the maelstrom of the symphonic orchestra.

Because many conductors did not carefully direct their orchestras to play the nuances of dynamics in performance with the larger orchestras of the day, “it was out of this necessity that the score of Ariadne was born. The orchestra had not been relegated to the role of accompanist and yet, in spite of the expressive force of the chamber orchestra, the sounds and words uttered by the singer are bound to be intelligible in any performance, no matter how heartless the officiating conductor may be.”

Strauss believed that the words must be understood, and that even with the orchestra at its loudest, the voice would still be heard. Voices could be heard over these orchestras because of the certain range and tessitura in which the roles are written. The Komponist,

---

104 Ibid., 100.
105 Ibid., 99.
though written in quite a recitative-like manner, has a high tessitura, and yet the words must still be understood. Strauss cautions his singers and gives them the clue of how to sing with an orchestra.

Therefore, my dear singers, if you wish to be good actors as well, sing mezza voce and pronounce your words clearly, and the orchestra will automatically accompany you better and the public will enjoy listening to you in this harmless comedy more than if, struggling in vain against a superior enemy, you strain your vocal cords unnecessarily for the sake of an opera from which you cannot hope to reap aria applause.\footnote{106}{Richard Strauss, Recollections and Reflections, ed.Willi Schuh, trans. L.J. Lawrence (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1977), 101.}

Because of the importance of text, both Strauss and his librettist Hofmannsthal made a progression from Wagnerian aesthetics back to the “Mozart element.”\footnote{107}{Karen Forsyth, Ariadne auf Naxos by Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss: Its Genesis and Meaning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 9.} The “Mozart element” involved returning to the “older Mozartian set number opera with its clear divisions between recitative and aria which is one method of saving the word from being drowned in the music.”\footnote{108}{Ibid., 8.} After reading Strauss’s insights on his own music and that of Wagner and his predecessors (e.g. Beethoven, Mozart, Weber, and Gluck), one realizes that Strauss and Wagner are neo-classical composers, though they sought out a new orchestration.\footnote{109}{Ibid., 69.}

With this new orchestration, a new type of voice that came from these pants role characters (Orfeo, Cherubino, and Fidelio) needed to emerge. This new type of voice is a type of helden-mezzo-soprano, or, as it is now known, the Zwischenfach.

By the time they were writing Der Rosenkavalier and Ariadne auf Naxos, Strauss and Hofmannsthal were moving back to Mozart’s aesthetic with set numbers and a
smaller orchestration. The words were important. “At the centre of their deliberations was the age-old question of the relationship of word and music in opera.” Strauss said that if someone came up to him and stated that they understood every word, it was the highest praise. “If this is not the case you may safely assume that the orchestral score was not played in the manner exactly prescribed by me.” He explained the “peculiar nature of the dynamics I use in my scores.” In his need for the words to be understood, and the orchestral score to be played as he composed it, “Strauss embraced the Wagnerian alliance of poetry, drama, and music.” For Strauss, melody was important as well. What type of voice could help to carry words and melody over the orchestra? Zwischenfach.

4.3 IMPORTANT SINGERS OF WAGNER’S AND STRAUSS’S TIME WHO WOULD NOW BE CONSIDERED ZWISCHENFACH

In the time of Wagner and Strauss, there were many strong singers with good technique based on the Italian bel canto style. When he was 16, Wagner heard Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient (1804-1860) for the first time and was inspired for much of his early composing career. Other important singers include Martha Mödl (1912-2001), Marie Gutheil-Schoder (1874-1935), and Lotte Lehmann (1888-1976).

The most important singer who influenced Wagner was Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient. She premiered the Zwischenfach roles in many of his operas.

---

112 Ibid., 97.
The artistic idol and inspiration of his early life, the soprano Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient – unforgettable, for him, not only as Beethoven’s Leonore but as Bellini’s Romeo – was an unfathomable (his word) dramatic and interpretative genius with (as he freely admitted) imperfect purely vocal powers; he gladly welcomed her participation as Adriano, Senta, and Venus in the first performances of his early full-scale Romantic operas. Schröder-Devrient, however, was evidently a case apart; in general, what Wagner required of his singers was pretty much what most nineteenth- and even twentieth-century composers have usually demanded: beautiful tone, clear enunciation, a firm vocal line, and precision in musical detail.\footnote{114}{Desmond Shawe-Taylor, “Wagner and His Singers,” in Wagner in Performance, ed. Barry Millington and Stewart Spencer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 15.}

Leonore was and still is considered a soprano role, but very much lies in the middle voice and in the tessitura of the Zwischenfach. Bellini’s Romeo is now considered a mezzo-soprano role, however, it also lies quite often on the top line of the staff and requires a certain metallic quality in the voice. According to Wagner, “No! She had no ‘voice’ at all, but she knew how to use her breath so beautifully, and to let a true womanly soul stream forth in such wondrous sounds, that we never thought of either voice or singing!”\footnote{115}{John Potter and Neil Sorrell, A History of Singing (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 135.} In terms of acting and stage presence, she “had sexual allure (Sinnlichkeit),”\footnote{116}{David Trippett, Wagner’s Melodies: Aesthetics and Materialism in German Musical Identity (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 187.} whereas many of the Germans were far too intellectual and could not enact the dramatic intent on the stage. Schröder-Devrient stood out “from other singers by achieving what was to become the central ideal of Wagnerian singing: the matching of vocal prowess with equal dramatic skill, making her a genuine singing actress.”\footnote{117}{John Potter and Neil Sorrell, A History of Singing (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 133-34.} She, with her voice and acting, is the definition of the Zwischenfach singer. What was
interesting is that she was actually in her period of vocal decline once Wagner started composing with these roles in mind for her. She first premiered Adriano in *Rienzi* (1842), followed by Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer* (1843), and followed by Venus in *Tannhäuser* (1845). However, “she became the embodiment of a successful concept of intuitively comprehensible German melodic sound that subsumed both French and Italian traditions by performing their vocal lines in her unique manner.”

Because Wagner was obsessed with his muse Schröder-Devrient, there was much written about her. However, there were several other important singers in the time of Wagner and Strauss, including Martha Mödl, Marie Gutheil-Schoder, and Lotte Lehmann, though not nearly as much information is available about them. Martha Mödl was in the later generation of dramatic singers. She was a mezzo-soprano who became a dramatic soprano and later returned to mezzo-soprano. Had the term *Zwischenfach* been a viable option, this is what she would have been. She sang Kundry at Bayreuth in 1952 and this was possibly her most famous role.

Marie Gutheil-Schoder was supposed to be the first Komponist, though she became ill with a cold and did not sing. She also was one of the first Octavians, and was known for Carmen. However, she was officially considered a soprano. After she stopped singing, she taught the great mezzo-soprano Risë Stevens. Gutheil-Schoder sang

---


everything – First Lady, Eva, Elektra, Salome, Octavian, Mignon, Carmen.\textsuperscript{121} She would have been a true \textit{Zwischenfach}, with the dramatic power of the voice, and the ability to sing well in both low and high tessituras.

Richard Strauss adored Lotte Lehmann, a German soprano. “She combined a warm voice and excellent diction with inspired acting ability and a beautiful stage appearance, all of which made her a unique interpreter of my female roles.”\textsuperscript{122} However, not only did she sing his female roles, but she was also Octavian and the first Komponist. Though she was considered a soprano, she had the metal in her voice to be considered a \textit{Zwischenfach} and was the acoustic ideal for Richard Strauss.

The types of singers these two composers used for the roles were distinctive. They had dramatic personalities on and off the stage. In addition, they had a power to their voice, especially in the upper middle range. As evident in the excerpts presented in Chapter 5, these roles need to be sung by a specific type of voice. A lyric mezzo-soprano or a contralto would not be able to sing these roles, as they would be either too high or too low in tessitura. Additionally, the voice of a lyric singer would most likely be too light for the instrumentation. These roles require a specific voice type: the \textit{Zwischenfach}.

CHAPTER 5
OPERAS AND ZWISCHENFACH ROLES

Range, registration, and tessitura are important factors in determining Fach. All sopranos have the range to sing the Zwischenfach repertoire. However, the determining factors of the Zwischenfach are the registration, the metallic timbre, and where the power of the voice lies. For most sopranos, the strongest notes in the range are far above the staff. For the Zwischenfach, the best notes are those at the top of the staff and slightly above it (F5 to G#5). As one will see in the analysis of the arias of five Wagnerian and Straussian characters - Adriano, Venus, Kundry, Octavian, and the Komponist - the range, tessitura, orchestration, and the use of vowels will show that the Zwischenfach is an important and distinctive category.

In addition to the vocal implications, the composers used associations of intervals that date back to the Baroque era. Wagner and Strauss enhanced the Baroque meanings of the intervals by using them in various ranges. “Besides onomatopoeia, the mimicking of movement and the imitation of speech inflections, the depiction of emotions was particularly important in Baroque opera. It was this that was the starting point for Wagner’s musical language.”123 Wagner studied Bach and Handel and knew the aesthetic expectation of intervals. “In the general depiction of affects and character states, intervals have a meaningful function because they are the constituent parts of the melody and can give us many clues.”124 In Tannhäuser, Wagner often uses the interval of the fourth when Venus sings. “The fourth is used for exclamations. If it ascends and is placed at the

124 Ibid., 10-11.
beginning of a theme or a melody, then the elemental strength that resides within it allows it to convey heroic, decisive affects. Indeed, ascending melodies in general come across as powerful and energetic.”

Kundry sings many intervals of the second. “The second, a small interval, tends to be used for affects of faintheartedness or grief. Successive descending chromatic steps depict despair, pain or a state of fear…When ascending, they connote supplication or entreaty. A melody that proceeds in small steps and sinks back within its own compass depicts a depressed emotional state…Major seconds tend to connote more joyful affects.” In addition to intervals, modes are also important. The major mode is often a sign of assuredness or happiness. “The minor mode in general is used to depict a darkening of mood, but also of emotional complexity.”

Not only from a standpoint of emotion and mood are intervals important, but where they are placed within the singer’s range can also have a great effect on emotion. With regard to the Zwischenfach, one will see that many of these intervals are used in the range that lies directly above the secondo passaggio (F5 to G#5), an area of great dramaticism and power for the Zwischenfach singer.

In addition to intervals helping to guide the dramatic setting of the vocal line, instruments play an important role as well. “Individual instruments are time and again used for specific moods. The strings are …mostly neutral in terms of affects. Muted or pizzicato violins are an exception, used to depict tender or melancholic affects (mostly in the context of love.)” With regard to other instrumentations, Rieger states:

In the musical portrayal of the sexes, the orchestration has a supporting function. Whereas the sound of the trumpets signifies dynamic action,

---

126 Ibid.
127 Ibid., 12.
128 Ibid.
decisiveness, the creative spirit and the world of ideas, violins impart human warmth and emotion. The woodwind are regarded as an expression of female inferiority…The clarinet, with its ability to execute a crescendo and decrescendo on a single note, is the instrument of intuition and eroticism (as it already was for Mozart), and also the instrument of the libidinal urge. Thus it is used to accentuate the seductive arts of Venus….Together with the harp, these classical ‘instruments of love’ [the woodwinds] demonstrate what a woman’s raison d’être was supposed to be.129

Strauss, who learned and studied the music and influences of Wagner, used these intervals and instruments in a very specific way. “Wagner uses all these associations in his music…This is why his music today remains so comprehensible to everyone; he continued the tradition of the affects and thus built on the foundations of what his listeners already knew.”130 Because both of these composers knew the traditions and the effects that the instruments emotionally recall for audiences, they were able to create characters using vocal and orchestral colors. They also knew how the voice would fit within or over the orchestration, maximizing the combination of timbres of the instruments and voice. They wrote for the female voice in a different way, helping to create the Zwischenfach.

In order of the operas’ composition dates, I will look at Rienzi, Tannhäuser, Parsifal, Der Rosenkavalier, and Ariadne auf Naxos, and the respective roles of Adriano, Venus, Kundry, Octavian, and finally the Komponist. These five roles all have something in common. In the original scores, they all are designated for soprano. However, today, they are all mostly cast with mezzo-sopranos, though occasionally sopranos sing them. I would argue that these roles should be categorized in their own Fach – the Zwischenfach.

130 Ibid., 13.
Many of these roles which should be called Zwischenfach are relatively short. They are vocally demanding, as we will see with regard to the high tessitura and dramatic characterization and orchestration. The Komponist only appears in the Vorspiel (Prologue). The bulk of the role of Venus is in the Erster Auszug (First Act) and just for a few (yet extremely difficult and high) pages at the end of the opera. The bulk of Kundry’s role is in the second act. Octavian and Adriano are the longest of the roles studied here, and no less vocally demanding. The tessitura for both of these roles does not remain as high throughout, though in certain segments, it is exactly same as the previous three roles. However, the slightly lower overall tessitura allows for the length of the roles. In all of these roles, the major dramatic moments call for the Zwischenfach voice, with all of its metal, color, and power just above the secondo passaggio to cut through the usually dense orchestra.

In this study, I will focus on the main excerptable arias for each character. I will look at the general range, tessitura, orchestration, and vowels for these excerpts, as well as provide a general overview for the entire role and compare and contrast them. From there, I hope to show that a specific type of singer should sing these roles. The vowels used, especially on the higher pitches sung in these roles, will be examined in order to find out why these roles are considered so dramatic. Orchestration under the vocal line will also be studied. The frequencies and formants of both the voice (vowels) and the instruments will also be considered. Though Wagner and Strauss did not know about formants, they did instinctively know what complementary instrumentation enhanced the power of these voices.
5.1 WAGNER

5.11 ADRIANO IN RIENTZI

Written in Wagner’s early period, when he was influenced by Bellini and the *bel canto*, Rienzi and the role of Adriano begin to show Wagner’s use of a larger orchestra and more dramatic vocal writing for all of the voices. It is very much in the same range as Romeo in *I Capulet ed i Montecchi*. However, the orchestration is quite different from Bellini with extra brass and a larger string section. In addition, the tessitura of the vocal line is much higher, especially with regard to the aria, or musical period, “Gerechter Gott.” Adriano in *Rienzi* is a trouser role in the old sense of the word, in that a female sings the part of a male, like Cherubino in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. However, this is not a lyric mezzo-soprano role. In various scores, Adriano is listed as a soprano and in others as a mezzo-soprano. The discrepancy of naming the voice parts is early evidence for the argument that this voice is a *Zwischenfach*. After careful study of the pitches and tessitura of the role of Adriano, it is clear that this is not a standard mezzo-soprano. Most of the role sits within the staff, very rarely below the staff, and when it does, it only remains there for a couple of notes. The most important aspect of this role is in fact the tessitura. Much of it lies around E5 to F#5. For a lyric or even an Italian dramatic mezzo-soprano or a lyric or dramatic soprano, this would be treacherous, as these pitches are exactly in the *passaggio*. For the *Zwischenfach* singer, these are the singer’s best and strongest notes and are above the *secondo passaggio*. The vowels that are most often set on these pitches are the closed vowels. Why? Wagner knew that these vowels have the formants and the power that will carry the voice and its words over the orchestra.
Occasionally, the vocal line within this role will reach A5 or A♭5, which are also powerful notes for this type of voice.

Though many have criticized Schröder-Devrient for being at the end of her career and not being able to sing well, it is clear that she must have been able to sing well enough, especially looking at the vocal demands and the tessitura of the role of Adriano. In the first aria of Adriano, the tessitura is high and the range spans from C#4 to A#5. The orchestration is dense, including flute and piccolo, oboes, clarinets, horns, bassoons, the serpentine, trombones, ophicleide, timpani, tamburo and bells, and the string group. However, when the voice enters for the first recitative, the entire orchestra drops out, except for the strings which have a tremolo chord (Figure 1).
On the word “Erde,” composed on Ab5 and an [e] vowel, the entire orchestra plays with the voice for the first time (Fürstner 714/1/2). At the next vocal climax, the flutes, bassoons, and trombones drop out, leaving the clarinets and horns with the strings...

---

At the next vocal high note on the word “dir” (717/1/3), the oboes and bassoons play with the strings. At the mention of his name “Rienzi” and through the following phrase, the orchestra is full and the voice sings in its high range. The orchestra drops out for the vocal “ad lib.” (719/1/1). However, when the voice stays at the top of the staff in the following measures, the bassoons and horns join the strings (719/1/3) to bolster the sound. Bassoons and horns have a first formant of between 400 to 500 Hertz (Hz). (Appendix B). This is a strong fundamental to which the voice can add its overtones. In addition, the singer’s formant (2,400 Hz to 3,200 Hz) is higher than most of the instruments’ second formants; therefore the voice will easily soar over this orchestration.132

The clarinets join in when Adriano becomes more sentimental, an affect also used for Octavian in Der Rosenkavalier (720/1/1). When the aria proper begins with “In seiner Blüte” (722/1/1), the orchestration is much like a Bellini aria with broken chords in the strings and with some chords played in the horns and bassoons (Figure 2). The clarinets reenter at the top of 723, doubling the voice. The clarinet complements the sound of the Zwischenfach voice just as the horns do, with its first formant at 1500 Hz (Appendix B). The singer is never drowned out by the clarinet and the voice is supported by the sound and resonance of this instrument. The vowels that this line is set with have similar frequencies to the clarinet as well, making complementary sounds. Through the rest of the cavatina (723/1/1 through 731/1/1), the orchestration remains the same, with the woodwinds slightly varying. However, in the last three measures of the cavatina (730/1/1), the timpani is added.

Figure 2. Adriano’s cavatina in *Rienzi*\(^\text{133}\)

In the middle section of this scene, at the *allegro*, bells, ophicleide, trombones, and serpentine are added (731/1/1). When the voice reenters (733/1/2), these brass instruments are playing chords underneath. After the bells are done ringing (735/1/2), the bigger brass instruments and the bell stop and the orchestration resumes as it had been in the first two sections of this scene. As Adriano sings “Sterbe” on A♭5 and an \(\epsilon\) vowel (736/2/4, 737/1/1), the orchestration becomes full mid-word (Figure 3).

At the *maestoso* (739/1/1), the full orchestra plays, adding ophicleide (Appendix A), tromba ordinale, and timpani, as the singer sings a G5. The brass drop out and the rest

---

of the orchestra plays (739/1/2) while the singer sings G5-A5-G5-F5 on [i]. Wagner sets this with a fortepiano in the orchestra to help the singer (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Use of fortepiano in Rienzi

[Image of a musical score page]

At the first big fermata before the coda (740/1/3), the orchestra completely drops out. The orchestra without the full brass plays through the coda, and the orchestration is sparse and allows the voice to carry for the first statement of “mit Kraft und Segen” (740/1/5). With the second “mit Kraft und Segen” (742/1/3), the trombones and timpani reenter and the tessitura raises slightly for the singer to G5 and A5 on a closed [ø] vowel. The final two measures for the voice, in the highest register, are unaccompanied except for the first beats of each of the two bars with full orchestra, without the ophicleide, allowing the voice to be heard as an instrument of its own (Figure 5).
Figure 5. End of Adriano’s scene in *Rienzi*\(^{136}\)

5.12 VENUS IN TANNHÄUSER

Venus in Tannhäuser, like Adriano, was originally meant to be sung by Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient. The first version that Wagner wrote for Dresden (Dresdner Fassung, 1845) was not fully fleshed out dramatically. He wrote a revision for Paris (Pariser Fassung, 1861) and this version is much longer, and in some places is composed in a slightly different range. The use of the voice in Tannhäuser is brilliant. Wagner sometimes uses the orchestration to enhance the vocal line, and other times lets the voice sing alone to full effect. Strauss wrote about Wagner and Tannhäuser:

…the following factors in the drama have a considerable effect on the tempo (and the performance) of the orchestra. 1 – The singer’s delivery; his temperament, his vocal talent, his feeling for significant declamation, his comparative ability to accentuate sharply… 2 – The singer’s ability to act, to express realistically on the stage the gestures described by the orchestra.\(^{137}\)

Temperament for Venus is extremely important. She is the goddess of love who is being shunned by her lover. She is rather schizophrenic in a way. On one hand, she has outbursts in various parts of the role when she is seemingly yelling at Tannhäuser, and on the other hand, she sings the most beautiful, seductive aria, “Geliebter, komm.” The schizophrenic nature of this role calls for a similarly schizophrenic voice, with the ability to shift quickly from the extremes of dramatic to lyrical singing. The Zwischenfach singer is just the voice for this role. It must be dramatic, yet sung well and calmly above the secondo passaggio.

Venus’s two versions of “Geliebter, komm,” although they sit a whole step apart, have similar tessituras. The original Dresdner Fassung is in F# Major, and the tessitura lies constantly around E5 to F#5 throughout much of the aria. In the Pariser Fassung, the tessitura is slightly lower, though E5 and F5 are sung repeatedly. This is not the most comfortable part of the range for lyric mezzo-sopranos nor for sopranos, though for the Zwischenfach, this is already above the passaggio. Therefore, my argument that the Zwischenfach is its own voice type stands with the tessitura of this role, in both versions.

In the Dresdner Fassung, the musical period “Geliebter, komm” is in a relatively high tessitura of C#5 to F#5, and the range is F#4 to A#5. It begins with the strings playing muted, giving it an ethereal ambience (Dover 83/1/7). The voice then enters piano, singing C#5 to F#5. The flutes, clarinets, and bassoon play along with the voice in the next phrase (83/2/5), which accentuates the vocal line (Figure 6).
These phrases musically repeat, and the orchestration repeats as well, without the bassoon. A solo violin then joins the strings and the flutes and clarinets as the vocal line

---

remains in the B#5 to F#5 tessitura (84/1/7). The orchestration is light and high. “Any lack of bass support thus has a destabilizing impact. This is the case here, and its disconcerting effect is heightened in Wagner’s depiction of Venus, in which he employs unusual harmonic combinations. The aria with which Venus intends to seduce Tannhäuser contains two tritones that convey the danger she signifies.”139

In the second section of the period, the orchestration is thicker with flutes, clarinets, valve-horn, bassoon and strings (85/1/3). All of these instruments play together on the word “Klänge,” which incidentally means “sounds,” and which is set on F#5 and an [ɛ] vowel (85/2/1). As the voice sings slightly lower in the next phrase, the winds drop out. However, in the third section of the period (86/1/4) at “Ein Freudenfest,” all of the winds play and the strings do not play except for short interjectory chords (86/2/1). At the climax and ending of this musical period, when the voice has an A#5 on “Göttin,” all of the winds are playing and only the violins. This helps to enhance the high frequencies of the voice.

In the Pariser Fassung, the “sound of the orchestra, thanks especially to the greater subtlety of the writing for woodwind, is of breath-taking refinement in the new passages.”140 The Dresdner Fassung was written in F# and the Paris was transposed to F; the time signature for the Dresdner Fassung is 4/4, but for the Pariser Fassung, it is 3/4. Aside from a couple of three-bar phrases, the phrases are mostly over four bars. This “aria,” or musical period, in both versions has a loosely identifiable form rather than being through-composed like many of Wagner’s later works. In the Paris version, the aria

---

is similar to a *da capo aria*.¹⁴¹ “Either the vocal melody subordinates the orchestral motive, or vice versa.”¹⁴² Wagner was trying “to create a rapprochement between the arioso-declamatory style of vocal melody and the expressive and allegorical motivic writing for orchestra: a goal towards which Wagner was still feeling his way in *Tannhäuser*.“¹⁴³

The orchestration and the vocal line in the *Pariser Fassung* are slightly different than in the *Dresdner Fassung*. The musical period of “Geliebter, komm” lasts much longer. The range is E♭⁴ to A⁵, and the tessitura is C⁵ to F⁵. The vocal phrases in this version are much longer but somehow more sensual, as it is written a half step lower. The orchestration is thicker and more lush in this version. The flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons play with the strings in the first phrase, unlike in the *Dresdner Fassung*. The horns join in at “Düften” (501/1/3), which they do not in the other version (Figure 7). The clarinet then doubles the voice in the second phrase (502/1/1). Wagner keeps the use of the solo violin, as he had used in the first version. However, the winds are more numerous and play constantly in the second section beginning with “besänftigt” (504/1/1). At “dein brennend Haupt,” the clarinet doubles the voice, supported by the strings (505/1/2). Wagner and Strauss must have known something about the complementary overtones of clarinet with a mezzo-soprano-like voice (Appendix B), because both of them use it. (Mozart did as well with Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito.*)

---

¹⁴² Ibid., 34.
¹⁴³ Ibid.
Figure 7. Venus’s “Geliebter, komm” from *Tannhäuser, Pariser Fassung*\textsuperscript{144}

---

The rest of the woodwinds reenter before the “Komm, süsser Freund” (507/1/1). A second group of woodwinds and a harp are offstage with the sirens before Venus sings “Aus holder Ferne” (509/1/1). The orchestra winds join the offstage woodwinds and harp when the voice enters (509/1/5). After the first vocal phrase of this section, the offstage woodwinds are tacet, though the harp continues to play with the orchestral woodwinds and split violin section. In this section, “Venus’s part…has an extremely high tessitura. Her palette of sounds creates an impression of flimmering will o’ the wisps that ascend higher and higher. Venus tries to seduce Tannhäuser once more with the words ‘Come, beloved, see the grotto there’, and we hear the fascinating sound of eight-part divisi violins and a chromatically winding melody. But she does not succeed.”\(^{145}\) The entire orchestra (winds, strings, and harp) plays with the voice singing “von meinen Lippen” (511/1/1) and continues through the next couple of pages. At the beginning of the third major section in this period, “Ein Freudenfest” (513/1/1), the entire orchestra plays. At this time, the harp plays in the pit orchestra, not offstage, building to the climax of the period (Figure 8). The vowels sung on these F5s are all sombre vowels [ɜ], [ɛ], and [ʊ], which help the voice to resonate over the large orchestration.

Figure 8. End of Venus’s “Geliebter, komm” from *Tannhäuser, Pariser Fassung*\textsuperscript{146}

On the second syllable of “Verein,” when the voice is on F5, the winds and harp are playing, but there are no strings. This adds a different color to the voice. The violins and violas join in for the final phrases of the period (518/1/1 through 518/1/9), but there is no orchestral sound under the word “du” from Venus, and on “fliehn” only oboe and clarinet, leaving Venus and Tannhäuser extremely vulnerable.

5.13 KUNDRY IN PARSIFAL

Kundry in Parsifal, one of Wagner’s later operatic endeavors, embodies the true Zwischenfach. “Kundry, the servant of the Grail, ‘rose of hell’ and penitent Magdalene, is the most complex and contradictory figure in all Wagner’s dramas, a challenge to psychoanalytical interpretation.”147 In Kundry, he created the “‘endless melody’” and yearning motive.148 Endless melody requires endless breath and the yearning motive, dramatic singing. She sings nearly the entire second act. However,

She barely sings anything at all in the first and third acts, but in the second is allotted an immense vocal part. She has to overcome wide, dissonant intervals, she has to scream, laugh, cry and give expression to the most varied affects. She sings of Parsifal’s mother, Herzeleide, in a gentle flowing melody with a simple, lullaby-like 6/8 metre, before moving into a prophetic tone of voice...The vocal and technical demands made on the singer are immense, and they undoubtably impart a certain magnificence to the character.149

When Kundry talks about Parsifal’s mother in the flowing melody mentioned above, “he uses a reduced orchestration here, and his strings and woodwind radiate a sense of care

148 Ibid.,154.
and affection.”

Wagner interestingly associates different instruments with the various genders. “The orchestration is also gender-specific here. Kundry is largely assigned the strings.”

The voice can easily carry over the string section, as the first formant for the violins is around 400 Hz and the second formant is between 800 to 1200 Hz. With the singer’s formant at work, the sound of the voice will easily project (Appendix B).

Kundry, in her musical period “Ich sah das Kind” in Act II of Parsifal, tells the story of Parsifal the child. It is extremely lyrical and requires legato singing. The range of the period from the recitative-like section a few measures before through the end of the section (Dover 346-357) is from A3 to A#5. The tessitura lies from F4 to F#5. Kundry sings in a slightly lower tessitura at the beginning of the musical period and then sings above the *seundo passaggio*. The orchestration always includes the string groups. However, at the higher vocal lines and dramatically more intense points, the orchestration becomes thicker with winds. The first time this happens is when Kundry says “das Leid im Herzen” (347/2/4) when the bassoon enters as she sings D5 (Figure 9).

---

151 Ibid., 201.
Another instance of the winds pairing with Kundry is on the word “Schmerzen,” where the bassoons also enhance her words on her higher pitch of F#5 (348/1/2). The [ɛ] on this higher pitch is complemented by the bassoon and strings. The clarinet then plays a counterpoint to the voice in the next phrase (348/2/1). The horns enter, though mostly playing during interludes when Kundry does not sing. As the vocal line begins to make its climactic rise to the A#5 (352/2/1 to 353/2/2), the orchestration becomes heavier with the clarinets, and bassoons, followed by the oboes and horns to the climax of the musical period (Figure 10). This requires a rather metallic voice to cut through this orchestration.

---

Wagner however was smart about where he used the winds. When Kundry is in the lower middle part of the voice (355/1/2) with many E#4s and D4s, the use of winds is minimal or non-existent. Wagner knew that the winds even helped enhance the upper pitches of the female voice. In her phrase “der Gram ihr zehrte den Schmerz” (356/1/5), the orchestration is at its fullest with the orchestration listed above, as well as the alto oboe and the bass clarinet. The voice is in the middle of the range, with D♭4 and G4 and G#4. Again, this calls for a more metallic sound to cut through the winds. It is interesting

to look at the vowels of the words that Wagner set on the higher pitches. Most of them are [e] or [ɛ] vowels (Figure 11). The closed vowels as discussed by Garcia create the *sombre* tones, which are the more dramatic sounds.

Figure 11. End of Kundry’s “Ich sah das Kind” from *Parsifal*\(^{155}\)

With regard to Kundry, “Wagner employs manifold musical means in order to create harried, shrill sounds for her appearance. Her vocal line is marked by extreme

intervallic leaps and rhythmic disjointedness. The sounds she utters range from a ‘primal scream’ to ‘anxious whimpering.’"156 This type of vocal line, over a full orchestration and with a high tessitura, as well as the dramatic sounds she must make requires a voice like the Zwischenfach, which has the dramatic power and character, as well as the ability to stay in the high tessitura for a prolonged amount of time.

5.2 STRAUSS

5.21 OCTAVIAN IN DER ROSENKAVALIER

Octavian, the title character, in Der Rosenkavalier was one of Strauss’s greatest compositional achievements. Strauss always refers to him as his beloved Rofrano, referring to Octavian’s surname. This role is the pinnacle of what we now call the mezzo-soprano repertory, though it takes quite a specific voice to sing this role. It was based on the model of the Mozart pants roles, and took into account the vocal models of Wagner and others. Hofmannsthal wrote to Strauss, “I felt something Mozartian and a turning away from Wagner’s intolerable erotic screaming – boundless in length as well as in degree.”157 Strauss’s roles, especially in Der Rosenkavalier “are states of human experience.”158 Lotte Lehmann sang them all at different points in her career, replacing Mme Gutheil as the Komponist. One can move from role to role at different stages in life and singing. According to Strauss, for the original Octavian, “as far as the acting goes, Mme Gutheil is this only one worth considering and looks the part.”159 Mme Gutheil, as

---

stated previously, was also the epitome of the Zwischenfach. She had the power in the voice as well as the range. Though she would probably today be considered a Zwischenfach, she sang both soprano and mezzo-soprano roles.

Octavian’s first entrance is “Wie du warst”. The range is C4 to G5 and the tessitura is A♭4 to F#5. This aria is representative of the rest of the role. The highest note in the role is A5, and quite often the tessitura is high, especially for a mezzo-soprano. The highest notes within this first entrance are set on [e], [u], and [a]. The most effective are the [i] vowels. This allows for the power of the voice to project over the orchestra. At Octavian’s entrance (11/2/1), the voice is in the middle range, and the orchestra includes English horn, clarinets, basset horn, bassoons, horns, and strings. As the vocal phrases continue and move into a higher tessitura, the oboe enters and eventually doubles the voice at “das weiss niemand” (11/2/6). In Octavian’s next phrase, beginning with “Engel” on D♭5 to B♭4 (12/2/2), the celli and all of the winds play. The horns continue with the string group as the voice descends. After this vocally exciting phrase, the voice drops to its lowest register, to prove Octavian is becoming a man, only the low strings, including viola, cello, and bass play (13/1/4). When the vocal tessitura jumps to F5 in the next measure on “Niemand” (13/1/6), the flutes, clarinets, and violins join in. On the “du” that happens three times at different pitch levels (13/2/1), the orchestra is full with all of the winds and strings (Figure 12).
After the climactic “du” section, the orchestration becomes lighter, with the winds alternating and the strings dropping out when the voice is in a low range and supporting it when it is in a higher range (14/2/1). While Octavian sings “dir” on an E5 (15/2/5), the full orchestra plays without the flutes. Then, when Octavian officially says to the Marschallin, “Ich bin dein Bub” (16/1/5), the orchestra plays in full, except for the basset horn (Figure 13).

---

The strings help to give support to the voice, and the wind instruments are used to complement and additionally support the voice, especially in its different registers that match the registers of the respective instruments. Octavian’s “Wie du warst” is a good introduction to the role with its tessitura, but later segments such as the duet with the

---

Marschallin and the Presentation of the Rose continue to show the range and high tessitura of this role.

5.22 THE KOMPONIST IN *ARIADNE AUF NAXOS*

The Komponist in *Ariadne auf Naxos* is also quite a special role, and takes a specific voice to sing it. Strauss was unsure for which voice type it should be composed, but since he thought that “the tenors are so terrible,” he did not want his young composer to be a tenor.162 Then he thought of his Rofrano and thought that making the Komponist a trouser role would be the perfect answer. He also knew that there were many more female voices that could sing and act this role than males in the business at the time. With the orchestration and the tessitura, it is clear that the best voice for this role is the *Zwischenfach*.

In *Ariadne*, Strauss used an “economical employment of an orchestra of thirty-six instruments.”163 The days of the big orchestra were ending. This was a neo-classical work, perhaps moving away from Wagner and looking back to Mozart. The role of the composer was difficult to conceive during composition. Strauss wrote to Hofmannsthal:

> A tenor is impossible…A leading baritone won’t sing the Composer: so what is left to me except the only genre of singer not yet represented in *Ariadne*, my Rofrano, for whom an intelligent female singer is available anywhere: Artot in Berlin, Sanden in Leipzig, Schoder in Vienna, Krueger in Munich. As a rule she is the most talented woman singer in the theater, who will look forward to the little cabinet part and will make something of

---


it…Believe me, the Rosenkavalier is the only possible casting for the young Composer.\textsuperscript{164}

All of the singers listed above were singers who we would now consider Zwischenfach singers. Schoder was the same Mme Gutheil who should have sung the first Octavian. Artot was also famous for singing high mezzo-soprano roles. Strauss was proud of his Composer, as was Hofmannsthal, who wrote to Strauss, “I believe if you go carefully through the part of the Composer, with all the high spots, moods and shades: well it is a star part!”\textsuperscript{165} In composing these high spots, moods, and shades, what resulted was a part written for a dramatic young Composer in the range and tessitura of the Zwischenfach.

The range of the Komponist’s aria through the end of the Vorspiel is B♭3 to B♭5. The tessitura lies relatively high, from D5 to G5, though of course there are sections where it sits both lower and higher. The orchestration is dense before the aria begins, but when the voice enters, it is a small string group plus two horns (78/1/3). When the singer sings “die tiefen” on C4, the strings are all playing, but then Strauss uses word painting of this word that means “deep” with the bassoons joining in (78/2/2). Clarinets and bassoons join the strings as the voice moves into the upper-middle range to F5 (Figure 14).

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 242.
Because of Strauss’s knowledge of Wagner’s music, he also often doubled the voice with clarinet or bassoon. The clarinet and bassoon have sympathetic frequencies to the voice (Appendix B), and from their experience with these instruments, both composers knew this without knowing the science behind it. In the second section (79/1/5), the voice is in the low range. Strauss takes the high winds and the violins away and only has the lower instruments supporting the voice in its lower register. The piano then joins in the orchestra, as well as the high winds and trumpets and trombones (79/2/2). The singer does not have to worry about projecting over the orchestra as she simply sings the text “jedoch” as short musical interjections in this section. Moving into the new section, the piano leads the orchestra to the voice’s G5 for “Mut” (80/1/2). Here,
the vocal line is doubled with the trumpet. Throughout this climactic section, the voice sings in an extremely high tessitura and the orchestra is full. Following the B♭5, a new mood is set, and orchestrally, this section includes the celeste, harmonium, and harp along with the strings (82/1/1). The clarinets and bassoons reenter on the G♭5 of “Cherubim” and the horns play again at “Thron,” which is an A5 for the voice. When the Komponist sings “Künst” (84/1/4) on G5, the entire orchestra is playing. The [y] vowel, a mixed vowel consisting of [ʊ] and [ɪ], helps to send the voice over this immense orchestration (Figure 15).

The full orchestra continues through the end of the B♭5 of “Musik.” The Komponist’s thoughts then become distracted by the other characters, and the music becomes disjunct. The tessitura remains high for the Komponist, and though the wind instruments play at different times, the texture is dense. However, Strauss does as Wagner had before him with full chords at the beginning of measures (88b/1/6), then leaving the voice alone for dramatic and vocal effect (Figure 16).
Figure 15. “Künstlen” in the Komponist’s aria from *Ariadne auf Naxos*\(^{167}\)

---

Figure 16. End of the Komponist’s aria from *Ariadne auf Naxos*\textsuperscript{168}

The Komponist’s “Sein wir wieder gut” through the end of the prologue shows the vast range and the high tessitura of this currently classified mezzo-soprano role. The

---

fact that the entire last two pages of the role are at the top of and above the staff suggests that this is not for a true mezzo-soprano. It is too high and the orchestration is also quite heavy for a lyric voice. The full orchestra plays, especially the music leading up to the B♭5 and final two pages of the Vorspiel, and the voice must project both the sound and the many words. This role must be for a more dramatic voice based on the tessitura and orchestration.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

6.1 A NEW VOCAL IDEAL – THE ZWISCHENFACH OF TODAY

Currently in Germany, the Fach system is still used for casting and it has been loosely carried over to the American opera houses. In neither of these systems is the Zwischenfach completely defined nor is it used on a regular basis. The five roles of Wagner and Strauss discussed in this paper support the argument that these types of roles should be considered as their own Fach. In addition, there are other roles in the German repertoire which were not discussed, including Brangäne in Tristan und Isolde and Ortrud in Lohengrin, which could be included in this group. Other roles in the French repertoire, such as Didon in Les Troyens, also fit into this category. Italian roles, in my opinion, are more distinctive as mezzo-soprano repertoire as the tessitura is lower and should not fall within this Fach.

Discovering that there are so many roles that fit the registration, timbre, and character of the Zwischenfach is a revelation. Many Zwischenfach singers like myself have had a difficult time classifying ourselves and figuring out where we fit in the Fach system. If there were a category, such as the Zwischenfach, singers in the middle-range of dramatic singing would have a better idea where they fit in the operatic casting world. The classification for dramatic singers in the middle-range, Zwischenfach, is indeed a new vocal ideal, because in the times of Wagner and Strauss, the distinctions of the Fach were not as clearly delineated. People were trained to sing well without much thought given to Fach. Much has been written about the evolution of the mezzo-soprano through
the Baroque and Classical eras, however all repertoire discussed is Italian or French. The Germans, innovative with their orchestration and instrumentation, demonstrate that they were also innovative in using the voice. They cultivated the Zwischenfach voice by utilizing voices that had power in the upper-middle range, unlike the Italians who tended to exploit the chest tones of the mezzo-sopranos and the extreme high ranges of the sopranos.

Jennifer Allen and Elizabeth Harris give examples of modern-day Zwischenfach singers.\textsuperscript{169,170} I argued that some of these are true Zwischenfach singers, such as Christa Ludwig and Gwyneth Jones. Other examples, such as Joyce DiDonato and Susan Graham do not fit with the roles I have studied. They are high lyric mezzo-sopranos but not dramatic singers. Other singers in the modern day who should be called Zwischenfach are Petra Lang, Michaela Schuster, and most importantly Waltraud Meier, who, at least in Germany, has made a niche for the Zwischenfach singer.

6.2 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Based on the vocal registration, the tessitura, and the dramatic intent, both vocally and with regard to character of the roles, the Zwischenfach should be recognized as a Fach in its own right. Since the days of the singers who premiered these roles through the singers of the present day, there truly is a niche for this voice type. If singers were allowed to identify themselves as a Zwischenfach, it would improve vocal training,

auditioning and casting. It would allow for singers who have never fit into one of the standard *Fächer* to have a vocal identity.

The *Zwischenfach* is characterized by a darker color, a metallic timbre, a large range with particular strength above the *secondo passaggio*, and dramatic acting skills. With their high tessitura and large range, the roles of Adriano, Venus, Kundry, Octavian, and the Komponist all require these attributes. Each role is orchestrated with complementary instruments to support and enhance the voice. By using the closed vowels in the *passaggio* and above, which Garcia II stated were the *sombre* and more dramatic of the vowels, Wagner and Strauss created roles for specific dramatic voices. These characters are sung by what should always specifically be referred to as the *Zwischenfach*.

The *Zwischenfach* should be treated by vocal pedagogues as a separate *Fach*. Using the concrete information found within the music such as tessitura and vowel usage may help vocal pedagogues have a new outlook on identifying younger students with bigger voices who don’t conform to the traditional *Fach* system. They can then correctly determine whether a young singer is in fact a young *Zwischenfach* and help to teach a solid technique and build the voice in preparation for dramatic singing.

Using the term *Zwischenfach* as a distinct label for a singer, as one would a soprano or a mezzo-soprano, will help the discipline of music in a number of ways. Pedagogues will have another option for those singers with these distinctive vocal attributes. Casting directors will be able to know what roles to expect of the *Zwischenfach* singer who is auditioning for them. Singers will feel as though they have a

---

recognized vocal identity. The Zwischenfach is not an “in-between” category, but rather a classification of an extremely powerful singer possessing a specific range who is ready to conquer the music of Wagner and Strauss.
When referring to pitches within the text, middle C on the piano is C4 and the numbers will change at the octave.

**Brahmsschwärmerei.** Infatuation with Brahms

**clair.** French for clear. Garcia describes it as, when exaggerated, making a voice shrill.\(^{172}\)

**da capo aria.** A musical form prevalent in the Baroque period in ternary form, in which there is an A section, followed by the contrasting B section, and then returning to the A section, which can be ornamented.

**en travestie.** See pants role.

**Erster Auszug.** First act.

**Fach (Fächer, pl.).** German for category or pigeonhole. A term used to describe the range of roles that a singer would be expected to perform, such as soubrette, lyric soprano, etc.

**Fassung.** German for version.

**formant.** In the sound spectrum, they are clusters of energy frequencies that produce specific tonal characteristics.\(^{173}\)

**Leitmotif.** Anglicized version of the German *Leitmotiv* which literally means leading motif. It denotes a short musical figure which identifies a character, thing, event, or idea.

**messa di voce.** Italian for placing the voice. The technical vocal exercise favored for blending heavy and light registers on a sustained crescendo/decrescendo pitch.\(^{174}\)

**metal.** When referring to the voice, it describes a laser-like, brilliant sound.

**mezza voce.** Italian for half voice. It is a direction to sing at half power.

---


\(^{174}\) Ibid., 60.
musical period. Wagner referred to distinguishable segments of his music as this. Non-Wagnerians tend to refer to them as an aria.

ophicleide. Type of low, keyed brass instrument, related to the serpentine and tuba.

pants role. A role of a boy or a man played by a woman, which grew out of the era of the castrato, when men sang all roles.

passaggio. Italian for passage. It is the transition point between vocal registers.

portamento. Italian for carrying. It is the smooth carrying of the voice from one pitch to another, or a slide.

root vowels. The vowel included in the main, stressed syllable of a word.

sombre. French for dark. Garcia says it gives penetration and roundness to the voice. This creates the dramatic sound.\(^{175}\)

sombre mixte. The use of the dark sound in the middle voice.\(^{176}\)

tessitura. Italian for texture. Indicates the prevailing range of the piece of music in relation to the voice for which it is written.

timbre. The color or tone quality of the voice.

trouser role. See pants role.

vibrato. Italian for vibrated. It is the fluctuation of pitch, intensity, and timbre in the voice.

voce di testa. Italian for head voice

voce di petto. Italian for chest voice

Vokalmusik. Vocal music

Vorspiel. Prologue

Zwischenfach. In-between voice category; for females, between mezzo-soprano and soprano

Sources: All sources are footnoted, except those found in and adapted by the author from the Oxford Dictionary of Music and the Oxford Dictionary of Opera.

---


\(^{176}\) Ibid.
APPENDIX B: FORMANTS

Singer’s formant = 2400 Hz – 3200 Hz (Hertz = Hz)

A440 is A4 and is equal to 440 Hertz

Figure 1. German spoken vowel formants (in Hz)\textsuperscript{177}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>l\textsubscript{q}</th>
<th>u\textsubscript{q}</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>l\textsubscript{q}</th>
<th>u\textsubscript{q}</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>l\textsubscript{q}</th>
<th>u\textsubscript{q}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i;</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>2316</td>
<td>2125</td>
<td>2496</td>
<td>2796</td>
<td>2644</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>2136</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>2348</td>
<td>2867</td>
<td>2660</td>
<td>3026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y:</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>1667</td>
<td>1485</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>2585</td>
<td>2437</td>
<td>2691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>1612</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>2631</td>
<td>2518</td>
<td>2779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e:</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>2241</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2472</td>
<td>2871</td>
<td>2691</td>
<td>3055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1774</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>2867</td>
<td>2679</td>
<td>2997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o:</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>1646</td>
<td>1551</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>2573</td>
<td>2440</td>
<td>2708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2640</td>
<td>2488</td>
<td>2757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a:</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>1347</td>
<td>1236</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td>2785</td>
<td>2644</td>
<td>2941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>1460</td>
<td>1346</td>
<td>1583</td>
<td>2841</td>
<td>2679</td>
<td>2983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o:</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1102</td>
<td>2835</td>
<td>2673</td>
<td>2990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>1055</td>
<td>1279</td>
<td>2825</td>
<td>2668</td>
<td>2965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u:</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>1048</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>2760</td>
<td>2624</td>
<td>2877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>1184</td>
<td>1074</td>
<td>1302</td>
<td>2749</td>
<td>2570</td>
<td>2960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>1608</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1754</td>
<td>2829</td>
<td>2679</td>
<td>2968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>1746</td>
<td>1554</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>2811</td>
<td>2649</td>
<td>2968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a\textsubscript{begg}</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>1527</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>1663</td>
<td>2849</td>
<td>2651</td>
<td>2982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a\textsubscript{end}</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>2194</td>
<td>2873</td>
<td>2676</td>
<td>3017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a\textsubscript{begg}</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>1198</td>
<td>1122</td>
<td>1313</td>
<td>2876</td>
<td>2669</td>
<td>3039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a\textsubscript{end}</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>1204</td>
<td>2929</td>
<td>2713</td>
<td>3055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>øY\textsubscript{begg}</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>1078</td>
<td>1305</td>
<td>2815</td>
<td>2612</td>
<td>2927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>øY\textsubscript{end}</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1781</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2681</td>
<td>2540</td>
<td>2835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F1 = Formant I, F2 = Formant II, vowels listed using the International Phonetic Alphabet

\textsuperscript{177} Matthais Pätzold and Adrian P. Simpson, “Acoustic analysis of German vowels in the Kiel Corpus of Read Speech,” in Arbeitsberichte des Instituts für Phonetik und Digitale Sprachverarbeitung der Universität Kiel, ed. K. J. Kohler (Kiel: Universität Kiel, 1997), 225.
Figure 2. Instrumental formants (in Hz)\textsuperscript{178}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Formant I</th>
<th>Formant II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Horn</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>2300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>1500-1700</td>
<td>3700-4300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassoon</td>
<td>440-500</td>
<td>1220-1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>1200-1400</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>600-800</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>200-400</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Horn</td>
<td>400-500</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY


CURRICULUM VITAE

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Stephanie Patricia Weiss

Document Title: Zwischenfach – a Distinct Voice Type: A Study of Fach through Specific Roles in the Works of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss

Document Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Alfonse Anderson, D.M.A.
Committee Member, Dr. Linda Lister, D.M.A.
Committee Member, Dr. Tod Fitzpatrick, D.M.A.
Committee Member, Mr. David Weiller, M.M.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Mr. Nate Bynum, M.F.A.

EDUCATION

Mannes College of Music, New York, NY
Professional Studies Diploma in Vocal Performance, May 2003

Conservatory of Music at University of Missouri – Kansas City
Master of Music in Vocal Performance, May 2001

New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA
Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance with Academic Honors and Distinction in Performance, May 1997

Tufts University, Medford, MA
Bachelor of Science in Biology and minor in Drama, May 1997
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teaching Experience

Higher Education

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Assistant Professor of Music, Studio Voice – 2014 - present
Graduate Assistant, Opera – 2012-2014
Part-time Teaching Instructor – 2012-2014
Master Class – March 2011

University of Missouri – Kansas City
Voice Faculty - Department of Continuing Education – 2000-2001

New England Conservatory of Music
Teaching Assistant – Undergraduate Theory Department, 1995-1997

Summer Programs

American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS)
Graz, Austria
Voice Faculty – 2010, 2012 - present
Audition Training Seminar Faculty – 2011-2012

New York State Summer School for the Arts, Fredonia, NY
Voice Faculty, 2001

Private Studio

Private Voice Studio
Berlin, Germany – 2009-present

Brooklyn – Queens Conservatory of Music
Queens, NY
Voice Faculty, 2002-2004

Music in Chappaqua,
Chappaqua, NY
Voice Faculty, 2002-2004

Miscellaneous Instructional Assignment

Metropolitan Opera Guild
Voice Instructor - In-School Cooperative Guided Internship, 2002-2003

Suzuki School of Newton, Newton, MA
Solfège Instructor, 1997-1999

Greater Boston Academy, Stoneham, MA
Voice Instructor, 1996-1999
Edgewood School, Stoneham, MA  
Piano and Flute Instructor, 1997-1999

Needham Congregational Church, Needham, MA  
Children’s Choir Director, 1998-1999

Chorus Pro Musica, Boston, MA  
Voice and Musicianship Instructor, 1998-1999

**Performance Experience**

**Opera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Opera</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grimgerde</td>
<td><em>Die Walküre</em></td>
<td>Oper Leipzig</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitmetzerin</td>
<td><em>Der Rosenkavalier</em></td>
<td>Oper Dortmund</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giannetta</td>
<td><em>L’elisir d’amore</em></td>
<td>San Diego Opera</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus</td>
<td><em>Tannhäuser</em></td>
<td>Mecklenburgisches St.theater</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitmetzerin</td>
<td><em>Der Rosenkavalier</em></td>
<td>San Diego Opera</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dido</td>
<td><em>Dido and Aeneas</em></td>
<td>Renaissance City Choirs</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitmetzerin</td>
<td><em>Der Rosenkavalier</em></td>
<td>Cologne Opera</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcellina</td>
<td><em>Le nozze di Figaro</em></td>
<td>Staatsoper Unter den Linden</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grimgerde</td>
<td><em>Die Walküre</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marthe</td>
<td><em>Faust</em></td>
<td>Staatsoper Unter den Linden</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zweite Dame</td>
<td><em>Die Zauberflöte</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitmetzerin</td>
<td><em>Der Rosenkavalier</em></td>
<td>Stadttheater Bern</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dienerin</td>
<td><em>Die Ägyptische Helena</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aufseherin</td>
<td><em>Elektra</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus (cover)</td>
<td><em>Tannhäuser</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johanna (cover)</td>
<td><em>Szenen aus dem Leben der Heiligen Johanna</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitmetzerin</td>
<td><em>Der Rosenkavalier</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2007/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aufseherin</td>
<td><em>Elektra</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2007/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlafitten</td>
<td><em>Das Traumfresserchen</em></td>
<td>Stadttheater Aachen</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirtin</td>
<td><em>Der Traumgörgre</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2007/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiordiligi</td>
<td><em>Cosi fan tutte</em></td>
<td>Académie Lyrique</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musetta</td>
<td><em>La bohème</em></td>
<td>Oper Frankfurt</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erste Dame</td>
<td><em>Die Zauberflöte</em></td>
<td>Staatsoper Unter den Linden</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musetta</td>
<td><em>La bohème</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nedda (cover)</td>
<td><em>I Pagliacci</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerhilde</td>
<td><em>Die Walküre</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlafitten</td>
<td><em>Das Traumfresserchen</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priesterin</td>
<td><em>Aida</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erste Dame</td>
<td><em>Die Zauberflöte</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frasquita</td>
<td><em>Carmen</em></td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micaëla</td>
<td><em>Carmen</em></td>
<td>Opera Co. of Middlebury</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Works with Orchestra**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Orchestra/Group</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo soloist</td>
<td>Songs of the Wayfarer</td>
<td>L’viv Philharmonic</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo soloist</td>
<td>Wesendonck Lieder</td>
<td>Henderson Symphony</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>Le Rossignol</td>
<td>Berlin Philharmonic</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Lakmé</td>
<td>Opera Orchestra of NY</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soloist</td>
<td>4th of July Concert</td>
<td>Israel Philharmonic</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerhilde</td>
<td>Die Walküre (Concert)</td>
<td>Deutsche Oper Berlin</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medora (cover)</td>
<td>Il Corsaro</td>
<td>Opera Orchestra of NY</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musetta</td>
<td>La bohème (Concert)</td>
<td>Kansas City Puccini Festival</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo soloist</td>
<td>Honegger King David</td>
<td>NYSSSA</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solo Recitals**

- Stephanie Weiss, mezzo-soprano and Elena Sosulnikova, piano - Chaliapin House, Moscow, Russia, 2013
- Stephanie Weiss, mezzo-soprano and Karen McCann, piano – Doctoral Recital, UNLV, 2012
- Stephanie Weiss, mezzo-soprano and David Coleman, piano – Mahler Festival, Geneva, Switzerland, 2011
- Stephanie Weiss, mezzo-soprano and Nathalie Doucet, piano – San Diego Opera at La Jolla Country Day School, La Jolla, CA, 2011

**AWARDS AND HONORS**

- Graduate Assistantship, UNLV, 2012-2014
- Winner, Franz-Josef Weisweiler Stipendium for Deutsche Oper Berlin, 2005
- Winner, American Berlin Opera Foundation, Inc. Scholarship, 2004
- Winner, Richard F. Gold Career Grant, 2003
- Finalist, Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Midwest Regional Finals, 2001
- Winner, Bay View Music Festival Concerto and Aria Competition, 1999

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- AGMA – member, 2000 - present
- NATS – member, 2013 - present