

**Voicing Rupture: resisting docility through  
performances of feminine agency in Arnold  
Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten***

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### Abstract

My experience of learning and performing Arnold Schoenberg's song cycle, *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, can be explored through the lens of Foucault's 'docile bodies' theory – that is, bodies that are 'subjected, used, transformed, improved'. Participating in the disciplinary practice of self-policing, my obedience to the social, cultural and musical orders shaping western art song performance is enforced through self-imposed internalisation of normative practices and values. The singer's body – my own body – is regulated in the Foucauldian sense; 'disciplined' through training and conditioning to align with normative practices, and, simultaneously, I act as 'discipliner' through self-imposed policing and monitoring of my body. The compulsive need to engage in the acts and processes of discipline implies inherent deficiency or deviance; the body must be transformed and 'corrected' through the processes of discipline that reflect the internalised value systems a body is measured against.

In this exegesis, I explore my processes of self-regulation as disciplined and discipliner, investigating an intersection of ideals and tensions in my pursuit of technical command of vocal technique, obedience to the score, and the expectation of emotional abandon that an expressionist song cycle demands. Framed through narratives of 'service' and 'prohibition', I position the political anatomy of an eroticised, reproductive female body, exploring resistance and 'rupture' through the sexual agency of a disobedient and disruptive female singer.

## Contents

1. Discipline/r/d/ing docility: regulating the disobedient Other	4-20
2. Freedom by force: threatening feminine sexuality in Schoenberg's garden	21-33
3. Whipping out of submission: experiencing tactics and agency through classical vocal technique	35-43
4. Stimulating political anatomies in Song X: arousing her 'moist mouth'	44-55
5. Bondage: performing resistance	56-58
6. Bibliography	59-63

'Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write yourself. Your body must be heard.' – Helene Cixous, *The Laugh of Medusa*<sup>1</sup>

The hand-me-down dress, fashionable in 1999, doesn't fit.  
 Moulding soft curves,  
 plastic boning freed from neatly stitched lining and  
 the rough edges prick her skin.  
 Sweat leaks through the material;  
 she must be careful to hide the unseemly trail of darkened blue.  
 It could be nerves, but she tends to sweat.  
 She grips her hands, pulling at the sides of the skirt -  
 a useful habit  
 disguising the trailing hem she didn't have time to alter  
 (please, don't trip!)  
 Dishevelled locks are tamed,  
 hardened with the telling shine of non-stick hairspray.  
 Her skin is smooth and glowing,  
 fabricated by layer(s) of foundation  
 concealing creases  
 of worry and sleepless nights.  
 The usual tricks:  
 eyes accentuated to share their stories,  
 skin soothed with the scent of coconut and sweet perfume,  
 sparkling hair clips to compensate for ears without piercings.  
 I feel a disconcerting sense of familiarity and alienation

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<sup>1</sup> Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', Robyn R. Warhol, Diane Price Herndl (eds.), *Feminisms: an anthology of literary theory and criticism*, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 338

as I watch the videoed recording of my MMus voice recital.

It is strange to 'read' yourself.

Cue:

incredulous cringes,

self-conscious laughter,

serious concentration;

varying levels of narcissistic rapture.

But I am used to watching myself,

familiar with the sounds I produce from my body,

adopting useful common practices

of mirror use and recording devices -

those are the visible signs.

I conceal my processes:

dialogues of self-instruction,

self-correction,

an endless string of 'constructive' criticisms.

These were not learned behaviours that I had confronted or challenged,

appropriately naturalised

within my endless question for 'perfection'.

But

Foucault's 'docile bodies' theory changed all that.

My MMus classical vocal recital, entitled 'Pathways into the Garden', was comprised of Erich Korngold's *Abschiedslieder* and Alban Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder*, leading into the central song cycle: Arnold Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* [The Book of the Hanging Gardens]. This is a work of fifteen songs, with poetry by Stefan George, depicting a young Oriental prince

who enters into an exotic garden of paradise.<sup>2</sup> Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers explains that in this garden, the prince ‘courts, conquers and loses a beautiful beloved. The greening foliage and groves that welcome him into the garden (songs one and two) bloom into lush blossoms that vividly evoke, at the peak of the cycle, female sexual organs (song ten) that finally wither and die, symbolising the lovers’ growing estrangement from one another (songs thirteen to fifteen)’.<sup>3</sup> Pedneault-Deslauriers draws upon Julie Brown’s suggestion that ‘the elusive beloved shared traits not only with Semiramis, the legendary ruler of Babylon (circa 800BC) – an icon of *sexual excess and debauchery* – but also the mythical Istar, goddess of *sexual love and fecundity* who *enslaves, subdues and figuratively castrates her innumerable lovers*’.<sup>4</sup> From this perspective, Julie Brown argues, ‘in the end, the beloved and her garden prove lethal: the garden becomes a metaphor for the woman herself, a location stumbled upon and experienced with a certain mystery. George’s poems invoke something of the medieval notion of *hortus conclusus* [the *enclosed garden*]: woman’s body is something in which man is lost’.<sup>5</sup>

Several aspects of Brown’s interpretation framed my interpretation of the cycle. Firstly, the work is written to be performed by a female singer, however, with the text focusing on a sexual encounter with a female, presumably from the perspective of a heterosexual male, performing the song cycle poses some interesting challenges in terms of interpretation. While, later in the paper, I scratch the surface of these issues in my discussion of performing Song X, it was my curiosity with this mysterious female figure within the poetry that informed my choice of a Foucauldian critical framework.

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Stratford, programme notes for ‘Ludovico Ensemble: The Roman Garnett Concert Series (2011), 5

<<http://www.bostonconservatory.edu/sites/all/files/programs/Ludovico%232%28Nov.21%29Program-WEB.pdf>>

<sup>3</sup> Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers, ‘Music on the Fault Line: Sexuality, Gender, and the Second Viennese School, 1899-1925, (PHD Diss., McGill University, 2010), 135

<[http://digitool.library.mcgill.ca/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object\\_id=86679135](http://digitool.library.mcgill.ca/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=86679135)>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. See Julie Brown, ‘Schoenberg’s *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten*: Analytical, Cultural, and Ideological Perspectives’ (PhD diss., King’s College, University of London, 1993), 154-159. Please note that all italicised emphasis within quotation, unless specified, are my emphasis.

<sup>5</sup> Julie Brown, ‘Schoenberg’s *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten*’, 159

Upon reading Brown's words, I was enticed to explore how taking pleasure in acts of physical discipline relates to the singing body; in a very basic sense, the prospect of taking pleasure from the dual act of playing physical discipliner and disciplined. With this lens layered upon the narrative of George's poem, I base my interpretation of the song cycle as a whole from a line in Song VI, capturing the protagonist in the throes of courtship: *'service and payment, permission and prohibition, of all things only this is necessary'*.<sup>6</sup>

Interpreting the song cycle using the cues of 'service' and 'prohibition', the protagonist is in servitude to sexual desire: clasped in rapturous adoration at the very sight of her, desperate to touch her, relishing in sexual adoration, and worshipping her body upon consummation. However, her body is also a site of prohibition, positioned as an 'enclosed garden' that threatens to emasculate the protagonist.<sup>7</sup> The external threat of the 'watchers' from outside of the garden grow stronger and the protagonist is left alienated and bitter at her rejection as the garden disintegrates.

Songs I and II sets the scene of symbolist poetry as Schoenberg's musical aesthetic captures an exotic garden of paradise 'under the protection of dense leaves' (I). There are no personal pronouns until the shift to action: 'but my dream pursues only one goal' (II). Songs III-V explore dutiful servitude to the lover. Captivated at first glance, 'no wish stirred in me, before I saw you' (III), pleading 'look upon the clasping of my young hands graciously, choose me as one of those who serve you' (III), 'so that I can lay my cheek as a stool beneath her soles' (V). Songs III and IV emphasise that this world is somehow partitioned: 'as a novice, I entered your

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<sup>6</sup> Stratford, 3. All subsequent translations that I use in quotation throughout this exegesis are from Stratford's translation included in his programme notes. Due to the limitation of my word count, inclusive of references, bibliography and appendix, I am not able to include these translations in full within the exegesis itself. The programme notes accompanying my recital include these translations.

<sup>7</sup> Bryan R. Simms, *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg, 1908-1923* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 46.

enclosure' (III); as I enter 'into the splendid domain of other masters...it seemed that through the high gate rails, the glance, before which I knelt untiringly, was seeking me questioningly or giving signs' (IV). Songs VI-VIII explore self-imposed punishment, building with emotional intensity and arousing desperation: 'Anxiety and hope oppress me in alternation, my words are prolonged into sighs, I am afflicted with such impetuous longing' (XII); 'If today I do not touch your body, the thread of my soul will break like a bow string stretched too tight. Let mourning veils be beloved signs for me, who has suffered, since I belong to you. Judge whether I deserve such anguish?' (Song XIII). Songs IX-XI signifies their sexual encounter: the first kiss is likened to a desert parched by a heat wave that only one drop of water will hardly satisfy.

Consummation is expressed in highly erotic imagery of a moist flower bell enclosed with thorns, followed by post-coital whispers as their limbs tremble like weak reeds and they rest behind the 'flowery gate'. Songs XII-XV begins as a sacred worship of each other, transitioning mid-way through song XII into a warning: 'do not think about the misshapen shadows that rock up and down the wall, do not think about the watchers who may separate us, and do not reflect that the white sand outside the city is ready to sip our warm blood'. Song XIII marks distancing to observation as 'you lean against a white willow'; the protagonist watches the stiff points of her fan from afar and invites her upon a boat, 'in vain'. XIV and XV signify the disintegration of the garden as the fickle lights 'flicker and change' before the realisation 'she is gone forever', leading into an abrupt heightening of musical intensity as the garden crumbles.

My reading of the cycle is shaped by these perspectives of 'service' and 'prohibition'. The enclosed garden of the female body instils sexual desire in the protagonist; at one glance, a contract of servitude to sexual desire in bound, but her body is forbidden and partitioned as an enclosed garden that he shall not penetrate. Perhaps there is pleasure from the prohibition she represents, but her body also poses a threat to the very order that sustains the power of the protagonist. Sexual fulfilment through consummation risks emasculation, and, as the cycle progresses, the presence of the watchers from outside of the garden grows, threatening their love with ominous shadows against the walls of their enclosure.



These themes of an external gaze, partitioned spaces, the sexual and erotic female body, and punishment and servitude formulate a basis for my engagement with Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Foucault's theory of 'docile bodies' – that is, bodies that are 'subjected, used, transformed, improved' – serves as a framework by which I explore my performative experiences as a training female singer learning and performing Arnold Schoenberg's song cycle, *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*.

### **Discipline/r/d/ing docility: regulating the disobedient Other**

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's 'docile bodies' theory investigates the shifting techniques of bodily punishment within penal institutions, expanding consideration to the army, hospital and school.<sup>8</sup> Forms of punishment moved away from dungeon confinement and the dismemberment of the corporeal body towards individualised processes affecting bodily activity and the 'soul'.<sup>9</sup> Foucault articulates experiences of self-regulation through Jeremy Bentham's architectural model of the panopticon prison system, which serves as a metaphor for societal relations.<sup>10</sup> In this system, a prison guard is situated in a tower encircled by prison cells – calculated lighting ensures that prisoners remain constantly visible under the threat of the gaze, never aware of when they are being watched by the guard.<sup>11</sup> Foucault argues:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Foucault's section on 'Docile bodies' in *Discipline and Punish*, 135-169

<sup>9</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 29-31. Foucault argues, the soul 'exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on the punished...The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body', 29-30

<sup>10</sup> Foucault positions the Panopticon as a 'generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men', *Discipline and Punish*, 205

<sup>11</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 201-2

A consequence of constant visibility is this : 'the power of regulation becomes worked by the self upon the self in a pervasive state of self-surveillance, monitoring, amending, modifying';<sup>13</sup> as Foucault explains, the prison inmate will police and correct their own behaviour in accordance with expectations of the prison system, even without a tangible threat of sanction by authority. The prisoner has absorbed the social and cultural expectations of the prison environment and thus self-regulates accordingly. Foucault observed that bodies were treated individually, rather than *en masse*. Control was exercised through subtle coercion, obtaining holds upon 'mechanisms', such as gestures, attitudes, rapidity; the very forces of the body became objects of control, with power exercised through economy, efficiency of movements and internal organisation; these processes of activity were constantly supervised in uninterrupted and constant coercion, according to a codification and partitioning of time, space and movements.<sup>14</sup> Foucault writes,

What was being formed was a *policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviours*. The human body was entering into a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A '*political anatomy*', which was also a '*mechanics of power*', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and efficiency that one determines. *Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies*.<sup>15</sup>

At the crux of Foucault's argument is the complex relationship between aptitude, obedience and domination:

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<sup>13</sup> Adams, *Self and Social Change*, 80

<sup>14</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 137

<sup>15</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 138

Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)...*Disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination.*<sup>16</sup>

Applying this theoretical model to classical vocal technique and my experience of learning and performing Arnold Schoenberg's work is hinged upon Foucault's 'docile bodies' theory – that is, bodies that are 'subjected, used, transformed, improved'<sup>17</sup>. However, it is vital to first set up how these frameworks can apply to the singing body and their relevance in existing musicological approaches.

In 'Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance', Suzanne Cusick positions all audiences and performers as governed by social rules that determine what is 'appropriate' in given contexts.<sup>18</sup> Performances are thus shaped by social understandings and established practices. Adherence to these culturally constructed frameworks is an act of obedience that reinforces and normalises cultural convention.<sup>19</sup> Cusick uses a gendered lens to examine the ideological feedback loop sustaining and sustained by the 'public enactment of obedience to a culturally prescribed script'.<sup>20</sup> She positions musical performance as a 'meticulous organised ritual for reaffirming obedience, [...] performances [...] by which we teach ourselves, over and over, the pleasure of submitting to the amorphous but ubiquitous cultural messages we have come to call 'discourse''.<sup>21</sup>

Cusick explores the premise that performances of musical works must be faithful to 'the music itself'.<sup>22</sup> She positions the performer and audience as 'disappearing selves' - the persona of the performer is subordinated in favour of the persona in and of the music, acting as 'medium' of

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<sup>16</sup> Foucault., 138

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 136

<sup>18</sup> Suzanne Cusick, 'Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance', *Repercussions* 3/1, (1994), 81

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 87

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 80-81

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 85

<sup>22</sup> Cusick explains that 'the music itself' is understood as indicating the material or notes of a musical work removed from a performance context and implying limited possibilities of interpretation, 'Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance', 79

the 'composer's voice', and the audience member submits herself as a silent and still vessel, focusing bodily awareness to the experience of sound and the all-encompassing 'music itself'.<sup>23</sup> Cusick shows us how both audiences and performers may resist these socially assumed roles. Through audio recording, 'the ritual of sharing the performance of complementary bodily obedience to higher power is dismantled: only [singer, Jessye] Norman's body must be disciplined to produce the performance we will share'.<sup>24</sup> In a recording studio, a singer is freed from the obligation to 'disappear' into customs of live performance. She is not bound by performance etiquette under the gaze of the audience, so both the audience and performer may be permitted to work against rituals of cultural obedience attached to the 'higher reality' of 'the music itself'.<sup>25</sup> Cusick does not explain the ways in which a singer's body is disciplined and this serves as the primary focus of my paper – to examine my experience as a classically-trained female singer working to engage with and resist the processes of discipline that regulate cultural obedience in performances of western art song.<sup>26</sup>

To critically position myself as a singing student within an institution, I draw upon Matthew Adams' 'The Regulated Self' in *Self and Social Change* where he discusses trainee employees.<sup>27</sup> Adams explains how related discourses, or 'the social rules, practices and forms of knowledge that govern what is knowable, sayable and doable in any given context',<sup>28</sup> form 'powerful, historically contingent rules and procedures – 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980b) [...] taken up by people, by societies, and effectively *produced* as tangible realities and a basis for personal

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<sup>23</sup> Cusick., 82-4

<sup>24</sup> Cusick, 'Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance', 101. Cusick argues that recording technologies enable an erotic musical experience through an 'intimate relationship of disembodied sounds and fetishized ears'. When listening to a recording, audiences may perform agency – 'we need not be in the dark; we need not sit still; we need not be silent...we can experience Norman-as-voice in a situation of the most private intimacy; we can have her all to ourselves', 101.

<sup>25</sup> Cusick, 102

<sup>26</sup> Adherence to word count enforces a limited scope, and so I limit my discussion of social identities to my experiences as a training singer who identifies herself as female.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew Adams, *Self and Social Change*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2007), 75-104

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 76

conduct and self-understandings'.<sup>29</sup> In the same vein as Cusick's discussion of expected roles performed by audience and performer, Adams explains,

Foucault argued that we are effectively *compelled* to take up and embody dominant discourses, to situate one's self in relation to that specific framework of language and associated practices, within a context of nominal freedom and agency [...] Thus what we come to understand as 'normal' in our experience of self is in fact the result of the subject's initiation by dominant discourses.<sup>30</sup>

Faithfulness to dominant discourses has implications on performing bodies. In her critical reading of Edward Cone's *The Composer's Voice* where 'the work itself' is assumed as inherently masculine, Cusick argues,

My faithful performance is not only, at a gross level, a *public demonstration of obedience* to ideas manifest in a particular work; it is also always already a performance of suppressing that which contradicts Unity (*suppressing the disruptive, the disobedient, the Other*); and it is also always already suppressing a disruptive/disobedient that is *marked feminine*, as it exists within a work's *persona*, a *persona* that will be marked masculine if the suppression of the disruptive feminine succeeds.<sup>31</sup>

With this in mind, to regulate the self in accordance with cultural obedience to 'the work itself' suppresses 'feminine' voices through implied masculine authority.

The processes of amending, monitoring and transforming the voice through classical vocal technique offers a compelling opportunity for exploration of these ideas. Docility is enacted upon the vocal mechanisms on an internal, physiological level. A singer works actively to internalise bodily control while demanding invisibility of its signs. A singer, educated in Estill Voice Training or in other methods formulated on voice science, will learn to isolate and control the vocal mechanisms, literally embodying Foucault's processes of disciplinary coercion. Not

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<sup>29</sup> Matthews, *Self and Social Change*, 75. I use italicised bold to show original emphasis from the author to contrast my own emphasis is in italics.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 76

<sup>31</sup> Cusick, 'Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance', 97

only is a singer's outward appearance shaped by 'appropriate' social and cultural contexts; not only will a singer go through processes of self-policing and self-surveillance to adhere to repertoire and performance contexts; a singer will also control the very internal functioning of her voice in accordance with 'correct' training. The singer cannot see her larynx or her vocal folds, nor will the audience see the display of internal gestures, but a singer is taught to recognise internal sensations and sounds produced, observing her own body as well as those of her singing teachers and colleagues. She will monitor the forces of her body and watch for any signs of disobedience or lack of control. Some signs of effort will be seen from extrinsic muscles, for instance signs of breath inhalation, however, any sign of effort must be kept minimized so as to convey the impression of singing with ease, regardless of emotional or technical difficulty. Singers are trained in a unique combination of scientific knowledge, sound/ear development, and training of the muscle memory, working towards standards of discipline that internalise bodily control and discipline invisibly, taking 'docile bodies' to a new and compelling level.

On one hand, internalising discipline to increase aptitude is an empowering act for a singer who reaps the reward of improvement and transformation of her vocal capacities. Her body is produced as efficient and useful for designated, specialised tasks. For instance, within a University context, singers will work one-to-one and in group lessons or classes to engage in the varying aspects of their craft. Teachers will model methods of teaching and work through 'universal' issues, such as how to address technical issues that need to be resolved. A singer is taught to deal with her own unique physiology; the more a singer can understand and, arguably, control how her voice works, the more variation in her vocal 'toolbox'.<sup>32</sup> This provides broader opportunities in terms of repertoire, as well as vocal interpretation using vocal colours, dynamic range, and light and dark (*chiaroscuro*). Singers are also able to work through their own difficulties, learning to correct the 'deficiencies' that may be inherently

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<sup>32</sup> I borrow this term from Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman (eds), *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*, (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 5

produced as a result as their unique physiology, differing rates of personal development, language barriers, or the specific challenges of repertoire.

An implication of constructing a vocal 'toolbox' is that 'tools, fashioned from the discipline itself, serve to maintain its limits, ensuring 'standards' within the standard repertoire'.<sup>33</sup> As Foucault argued, with aptitude comes increased domination – the singer embodies multiple levels of submissions; she is obedient to the will of the composer, cultural prescriptions, and to interiorised domination of the forces of her own body. Within a university context, tuition generally aims to equip singers with the fundamental skills to communicate creative interpretation through technical command of their audible singing voice and instil the problem-solving skills to effectively teach themselves. However, docility is also manifest in adherence to a particular vocal method, informed by and transmitted to students through a multitude of aesthetic preferences, teaching styles and university curriculums. What becomes of particular interest is this: at the same time as she is encouraged to internalise existing societal conventions and power structures, the female singer is becoming equipped with the very tools to resist docility and display an individual voice.

Adams explains that a trainee goes through a process of self-regulation and self-monitoring, manipulating emotion and self-presentation in accordance with 'normative conduct':

This is the sense that every word and gesture which makes up one's overall conduct can be broken down, disaggregated, analysed, monitored, regulated and rewarded, by the managerial gaze, to the point where there is a kind of internal vigilance, a constant self-surveillance, an absorption of externally imposed goals: 'a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing' (Foucault, 1980: 155).<sup>34</sup>

As I will articulate throughout this exegesis, a singer's conduct is broken down, analysed, monitored and regulated. A singer will submit herself to processes of self-policing and self-surveillance, but under whose gaze? Even more problematically, feminist scholars, such as Jana

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<sup>33</sup> Bergeron and Bohlman, *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*, 5

<sup>34</sup> Adams, *Self and Social Change*, 83-4

Sawicki, have critiqued Foucault's theory in *Discipline and Punish* for not accounting for gendered experience, arguing that Foucault's position affirms patriarchal values and internalises white, male, heterosexual middle class authority.<sup>35</sup> In applying a Foucauldian lens as a critical framework to make sense of my experiences, I risk enforcing Foucault's authoritative position over my work. However, by engaging with 'feminist' texts, namely the work of musicologists Suzanne Cusick and Susan McClary with readings of the female body by Iris Marion Young and Sandra Lee Barkty, I introduce new perspectives – those of Cusick's disruptive, disobedient Other – into analysis of my position as a training female singer making sense of my experience through Foucauldian frameworks.

To consider current applications of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* to musical performance, I begin by drawing upon *Disciplining Musicology: Musicology and Its Canons*.<sup>36</sup> Katherine Bergeron and Philip Bohlman have discussed the ways in which musicians undergo processes of physical discipline, developing 'technique' or 'the training of the body into an orderly relation with itself in the production of music'.<sup>37</sup> Such training involves 'a physical partitioning: the hand, the arm, the fingers, the spine are all marked, positioned, according to separate functions'.<sup>38</sup> The ear of the performer is disciplined with 'the tuned scale, or canon, [which] is a locus of discipline, a collection of discrete values produced out of a system that orders, segments, divides'.<sup>39</sup> Bergeron and Bohlman argue that the values of such practices are internalised as the performer models her behaviour on the canons she attempts to reproduce, implying social control that extends to larger social bodies, maintaining 'social harmony'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Jana Sawicki, *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body*, (New York, London: Routledge, 1991)

<sup>36</sup> Bergeron and Bohlman (eds), *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Bergeron and Bohlman examine the construction of musical canons through the 'disciplines' of historical musicology, ethnomusicology and music theory that are used in musical discourses. It is worth noting that while musical performance is drawn upon throughout the collection of essays to illustrate arguments, it is not distinguished as a 'discipline'.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*



Learning and performing Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* put these perspectives into action on several levels. While I will later discuss my appropriation of 'political anatomy' in relation to internalisation of vocal technique and bodily control at the level of the vocal mechanisms themselves, the ideas of partitioning and order are particularly relevant to my process of learning this work. My accompanist and I developed a cohesive relationship, developing familiarity through repetition of the work and the tactical formulation of 'anchor points'. Intentionally, I partitioned each individual aspect, cordoning off each musical element - vocal pitch, treble clef piano, bass line, chords, rhythm, and language - in order to address them individually and then introducing each aspect to complete the bigger picture. Incidentally along the way, I internalised the rhythm of the piano part within my memory of the vocal line, using the accompanying rhythm as an anchor more so than pitch; this action helped to stabilise my vocal line against the dissonance of the piano part. In my process of learning this work, I also developed good relative pitch, associating the sensation of where a note 'felt' in my voice with learned pitches. This was a case of learning to associate particular pitches with key points in Schoenberg's cycle that I was having difficulty with. For instance, through repetition of the d#'' that begins song VI, this pitch became ingrained in my vocal memory; the combination of feel in relation to a learned pitch, vocal muscle memory and successful recall under pressure enabled anchor points within the cycle.

Liz Garnet's paper, 'Choral Singing as Bodily Regime', discusses bodily discipline as a structure that regulates the physical experience of the 'every-day' singers participating in choirs.<sup>41</sup> Garnett refers to Ronald Barthes 'The Grain of the Voice' as the meeting of social processes and individual identity: the voice is singular and unique, but also 'generic, formed by forces beyond the control of the individual, whether those of nature (lungs, larynx, resonant cavities) or of nurture (language acquisition, gender roles, conventions of expression)'.<sup>42</sup> Garnet discusses the formation of a choral discourse, policing boundaries through an audition process,

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<sup>41</sup> Liz Garnet, 'Choral Singing as Bodily Regime', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 36/2 (2005), 249-269

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 250. See Ronald Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice', *Image, Music, Text*, tr. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977)

direction and surveillance from the conductor; and the promotion of choral unity by neutralising signs of individual social identity - namely, those of class, education and regional union.<sup>43</sup>

Lucie Alaimo's 'Disciplined Freedom: Expressive Musical Performance of the Military Band' explores the transformation from traditional settings of the military bands to 'entertainment' spectacles.<sup>44</sup> Through creative and humorous choreographies, the processes of physical discipline expected of military bands - that is, the traditional markers of genre and stylised movement - are used to work within and against prescribed limits simultaneously.<sup>45</sup>

I mention this work because I am primarily interested in focusing on the 'limits' in performance practices of art song, recognising tensions between obedience and freedom, and using this as a lens to discuss vocal production and bodily experiences. While I was surprised in the limited scope of scholarship bringing together docile bodies and musical performance, the work of Garnet and Alaimo formulate a backdrop for critical consideration of my social identity as a singer studying within a university. Ultimately, this involves the neutralisation of individual vocal qualities and performance skills, and awareness of the processes of discipline that enable a singer to perform within and against prescribed limits.

In focusing purely on my own experiences and limiting broader discussion to 'female experience of a singer training within a university', I risk generalisations that essentialise and neutralise social identities. I also have chosen to exclude male performers in order to limit the scope of this paper and its considerations. However, in overtly focusing on my subjective experiences as a training female singer and the markers of my performance that resist signs of

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<sup>43</sup> Garnet., 259

<sup>44</sup> Lucie Alaimo, 'Disciplined Freedom: Expressive Musical Performance of the Military Band', seminar presentation derived from thesis, 'Musical Performance in the Canadian Military: A Preliminary Analysis of an Institution, (Carleton University, Ottawa, 2011) <[http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~musicdpt/Alaimo\\_disciplinedfreedom.pdf](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~musicdpt/Alaimo_disciplinedfreedom.pdf)>

<sup>45</sup> Alaimo., 'Disciplined Freedom: Expressive Musical Performance of the Military Band', 13-16

neutralisation, my aim is to encourage engagement with the signs of individualised female agency in performance that may signify deviance and deficiency.

This exegesis grew from an inherent tension between technical precision of vocal technique, obedience to the score, and the expectation of emotional abandon in an expressionist song cycle. Framed by my interpretation of Schoenberg's cycle as 'service' and 'prohibition' within the enclosed garden of female sexuality, I explore my experiences as a female singer through the lens of self-regulated 'docility'. By focusing on my own experiences of being disciplined and my self-imposing discipliner, I explore the possibilities of resistance within the limits of western art song performance practice, drawing on Cusick's idea of the 'disobedient' and 'disruptive' Other.

To position this felt tension between obedience to Schoenberg's score and emotional abandon, I explore the 'force' of Schoenberg's inner compulsion in formulating the 'idea' or the inspiration of a work, in relation to the precision of 'style' in its scored realisation. Critical reception of *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* focused on discourses of violence and disruption to the 'natural' social and tonal order, as posed by the chromaticism and dissonance in atonality. However, feminist musicologists have also presented atonality as representing the threat of the feminine sexual excess, often silenced in the rational approaches of the analyst. I explore how spontaneous acts of feminine sexual agency in performance break apart my own practices of self-policing while disrupting approaches that evoke violence upon, and suppression of, the sexual excess of the prohibited female body.

I discuss the female voice, as disciplined through the instruction of classical vocal technique, as a signifier of increased aptitude as well as increased domination; a singer is trained to self-police, monitor and amend, manipulating her vocal mechanisms and the forces of their activity on an internal, physiological level that remains, for the most part, invisible. The very act of adopting rational and efficient internal organisation of her vocal mechanisms work against traditional representations of the feminine voice, often positioned as irrational and emotional.

By the same vocal training that ensures disciplinary limits, a singer builds tools of resistance to free her voice from assumed docility. I explore feminine agency through tactical and individualised vocalisations that empower a singer's musical interpretation, while working within and against prescribed limits.

Exploring the prohibited female sexual organs of song X, signifying the moment of consummation, I explore broader implications of self-silencing on the female body and her emotions, focusing on experiences connected to the menstrual cycle and her 'ruptures'. I position the audible female voice as a site of 'political anatomy' and resistance, working against suppressive representations that silence the female voice and her sexuality. The internalisation of disciplinary practices – that is, the monitoring, correcting, and transforming of the feminine body- stems from a position of perceived deficiency as the female singer self-regulates and punishes herself for failure to live up to constructed ideals in vocal performance. However, it is through the very process of 'rupturing' self-silence that enables a singer to negotiate experiences of obedience and freedom in a performance of Arnold Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*.

### Freedom by force: threatening feminine sexuality in Schoenberg's garden

In exploring gender and musical performance, I draw upon Susan McClary's text, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality*, and her key considerations underpinning performances of 'musical feminism'. McClary discusses the musical semiotics of gender, that is – the conventions constructing 'masculinity' or 'femininity' in the cultural discourses of music.<sup>46</sup> She argues that music provides a 'public forum within which various models of gender organization (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted, adopted, contested, and negotiated'.<sup>47</sup> Music has been associated with arousal and desire,<sup>48</sup> and gendered readings of traditional music theory suggest that the 'masculine ending' is 'normal' with implied abnormality of the feminine cadence.<sup>49</sup> With music traditionally considered to be 'effeminate' and 'feminine', McClary argues, 'male musicians have retaliated in a number of ways: by defining music as the most ideal (that is, the least physical) of the arts; by insisting emphatically on its 'rational' dimension; by laying claim to such presumably masculine virtues as objectivity, universality, and transcendence; by prohibiting female participation all together.'<sup>50</sup> McClary's argument draws our attention to a number of assumptions that have, traditionally, marginalised the position of women in all areas of musical participation and suppressed female agency.

McClary discusses the implications of gendered understandings in relation to the music of Arnold Schoenberg. Schoenberg writes: 'the dualism presented by major and minor has the power of a symbol suggesting higher forms of order: it reminds us of male and female and delimits the spheres of expression according to attraction and compulsion...The will of nature is supposedly fulfilled in them'.<sup>51</sup> In her case study of Schoenberg and his work *Erwartung*,

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<sup>46</sup> Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality*, (Minnesota, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 7

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 8

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 9-10

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 17

<sup>51</sup> McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 11

McClary argues that Schoenberg tends to avoid an overtly gendered position, instead, taking a stance of resistance to oppressive, political hierarchy.<sup>52</sup> McClary explains:

What Schenker continued to hold as sacrosanct – rational procedure, dissonant regulation, and laws of necessary closure – Schoenberg perceived as oppressive conventions, rather than immutable or natural. Yet throughout his treatise, Schoenberg also reveals how terrifying it was to identify himself with those *forces* that traditionally served to destabilise tonal certainty – *dissonance, chromaticism, excess* – but which were inevitably quashed in what had always been defined as the ‘*feminine*’ side of all binary oppositions *governing tonal procedures and narratives*.<sup>53</sup>

It is, therefore, the rational, objective, ‘intellectual’ frameworks shaping musical analysis and discourse that removes sexual excess and silences the feminine voice; serialism, for instance, is packaged as orderly and serene.<sup>54</sup> McClary argues:

The rational frame guaranteeing social order comes to permeate the dissonant discourse of the mad woman, and the chromaticism of feminine sexual excess no longer poses a threat: henceforth, it is appropriated – even guaranteed – by the highest achievement of intellectual discipline. One can now experience that frenzy, *that illicit desire* [...] because the composer and analyst can prove that every pitch is always already contained [...] Atonal compositions – like patients throughout most of psychiatric history – are usually *silent* during the process of analysis, for it is only apparently in the absence of those coils of seductive or demented sound, that order can be detected and objectively chartered.<sup>55</sup>

The atonal voice is thus ‘silenced’ by the rational, objective, intellectual, masculine processes that sustain social and tonal order.

This paper is assessed holistically with my voice recital and, on a fundamental level, this minimizes the risk of ‘silencing’ the atonal sound of Schoenberg’s composition or my own sung

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 105

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 109

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

and written 'voice'. However, McClary's position is crucial for critical engagement with *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* for several reasons. To re-iterate Cusick's position, 'the music itself' is associated with 'masculinity', with the disruptive/disobedient feminine/Other suppressed within a faithful or obedient performance.<sup>56</sup> However, the very qualities of dissonance and chromaticism associated with 'atonality' pose a 'feminine' threat to this assumed masculine authority. Furthermore, rational frameworks that seek to restore 'rational order' to atonality do so by silencing the feminine voice, excluding or silencing the threat of feminine excess. *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* is a particularly compelling case study, as Julie Brown argued, because the garden itself can be seen as a reflection of the female body, displayed explicitly in Song X and the 'enclosure' of the garden.<sup>57</sup> The male protagonist enters into servitude to his sexual desire, fulfilled with consummation, but, as Bryan Simms explained, this encounter is attached to the risk of his emasculation.<sup>58</sup> What challenges does this pose for the singer? In what ways does the female singer 'submit' to the authority of the male composer? Do these acts of submission take away from her sense of ownership and control over her own body and sexual agency?

To explore these ideas, I begin by discussing Schoenberg and the critical reception of *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* as an 'atonal' work. Richard Taruskin writes,

[Schoenberg's] name has been a battle cry, a punching bag, an article of faith, a term of abuse, and a symbol for anything and everything: progress, degeneracy, elitism, integrity, disintegration, regeneration, sublimity, ridiculousness [...] *Nobody in the history of music has been a more dependable whipping boy; but neither has anyone been a trustier stick to beat with.*<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Cusick, 'Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance', 97

<sup>57</sup> See Pedneault-Deslauriers, 'Music on the Fault Line', 135-136; Julie Brown, 'Schoenberg's *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten*', 154-159

<sup>58</sup> Simms, *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg, 1908-1923*, 46

<sup>59</sup> Richard Taruskin, 'The Poietic Fallacy', *The Dangers of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*, (California: University of California Press, 2009), 301

The complexity of Arnold Schoenberg's reputation and legacy is captured concisely by the final metaphor, evoking a duality of Schoenberg with both whip in hand and under its lashing. As I will elucidate, the reception of this work is framed by discourses of violence; it was as if atonality itself were the Armageddon of 'natural' social and tonal order, served by a somewhat sheepish cavalry of chromaticism and dissonance. This whip image also illustrates Schoenberg's conflict: he felt 'forced' to follow an inner compulsion that worked against his artistic education, and his follow through is articulated with the juxtaposition of 'idea' and 'style'.

In the programme notes accompanying the premier performance of *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, Schoenberg indicates a new style and form of musical expression achieved in this work:

With the George songs I have for the first time succeeded in approaching an ideal of expression and form which has been in my mind for years [...] But now that I have set out along this path once and for all, I am conscious of having broken through every restriction of a bygone aesthetic; and though the goal towards which I am striving appears to me a certain one, I am, nonetheless, already feeling the resistance I shall have to overcome: I feel that even the least of temperaments will rise in revolt [...] I am being forced in this direction [...] I am obeying an inner compulsion, which is stronger than my upbringing [...] I am obeying the formative process which, being natural to me, is stronger than my artistic education.<sup>60</sup>

Schoenberg expected that this new musical direction would inspire 'revolt' and 'resistance' through violation of prevailing social orders. In a review of the premier performance of *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, Richard Batka writes, 'well, it's said that perversions often begin where normal instincts are left unsatisfied. Could not the lack of response to his earlier works have driven this artist into his unhappy, perverse 'latest period' [...] He is at the peak of his

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<sup>60</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, as quoted in Willi Reich, *Schoenberg: a critical biography*, tr. Leo Black, (London: Longman, 1971), 49



antics. It can never get any worse than this.<sup>61</sup> This 'perversion' against 'normal instincts' foreshadows a position that holds Schoenberg guilty for trespassing 'natural' orders in the evolution of music. Alban Berg comments on this position in his 1930 interview with conservative music critic, Julius Bistron, concluding:

Had the word 'atonal' occasioned the birth of an up-to-the-minute musical theory , standing outside the line along which the art of music has naturally evolved, then the opponents of this new music would be right in all the insinuations they make when they use the word 'atonal' – *insinuations of being anti-musical, ugly, devoid of ideas, cacophonous and destructive*; they would, moreover, have every reason to *wail about musical anarchy*, to complain that the long-standing treasury of music is being shattered, and that we are helpless and uprooted [...] Just as long as a certain kind of music contains enough such triads, it causes no offence, even if in other ways it most *violently clashes with the sacred laws of tonality*. But if these laws were not sacred to me, how could the likes of us, defying all the unbelievers in the world, *amass the faith to believe in a new art, for which Antichrist in person could have devised no more devilish name than this word 'atonal'?*<sup>62</sup>

A review of the premier performance, written some twenty years later uses discourses of violence to describe Schoenberg's sound world in *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*. Edwina Stein writes:

*At the time the listener was struck, above all, by the new sound. It was as if a new spatial dimension had been opened up. One could make out contours, which hardly seemed any longer to belong to the realm of music [...] At one moment the sounds would float, released from any division into metre, as if time were trying to stand still; the next,*

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<sup>61</sup> As quoted in Willi Reich, *Schoenberg: a critical biography*, 50

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 34

sharply rhythmical figures, together with harsh chords, drew sound pictures whose dynamics approached the *threshold of pain*.<sup>63</sup>

Musicologist Alexander L. Ringer contextualises the atonal aesthetic using similar language:

Schoenberg *assaults the listener* with often *devastating dramatic force* engendered by all manner of extreme contrasts – rhythmic, melodic, textural, and harmonic. From a psycho-historical perspective, therefore, stylistic inroads like the much-misunderstood ‘emancipation of dissonance’ represent but very specific aspects of a comprehensive effort to *extricate* music from the realm of beauty, in nineteenth-century eyes the eternal preserve of all art, for the sake of naked truth, where *compromise is no longer tolerated*.<sup>64</sup>

On one level, this idea of violence is perhaps inextricably tied to the capacity of ‘atonality’ to ‘externalise states of the mind, to voice feelings, too strange or elemental for words – to be a music of the subconscious’.<sup>65</sup> This externalisation of an internal subconscious also communicated the creative introspection of ‘being thrown back into the imaginative and, above all, spiritual resources of one’s inner world’.<sup>66</sup> Ernst Krenek writes:

Atonality has always aimed straight at the substance, the gist, of musical expression, eliminating all intervening associations, all nonessential elements, and all the ornaments of handicraft [...] by *intensifying the expression of personal emotion to the utmost, it has demonstrated the loneliness and alienation of humanity as clearly as possible*.<sup>67</sup>

From these perspectives, as a performer, I simultaneously embody the ‘violence’ of atonal sound, the externalisation of internal emotion of the deepest level, and the threat of feminine sexual excess.

Schoenberg’s programme notes introduced tension between inner compulsion and artistic education, which can also relate to distinctions of ‘style’ and ‘idea’. Schoenberg writes, ‘Ideas

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<sup>63</sup> Reich, *Schoenberg: a critical biography*, 49

<sup>64</sup> Simms, *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg: 1908-1923*, 5

<sup>65</sup> Malcolm MacDonald, *Schoenberg*, second edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 119

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 100

<sup>67</sup> Simms, *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg: 1908-1923*, 4

may *invade* the mind as unprovoked and perhaps even as undesired as musical sound reaches the ear or an odour the nose';<sup>68</sup> such 'an idea is born; it must be moulded, formulated, developed, elaborated, carried through and *pursued to its very end*'.<sup>69</sup> The distinction between 'idea' and 'style' is articulated in Schoenberg's discussion of his compositional process:

In my case the productive process has its own way; what I sense is not a melody, a motive, a bar, but merely a whole work. Its sections: the movements, their sections: the themes; their sections: the motives and bars – all that is detail, arrived at as the work is progressively realised [...] the details are realised with the strictest, most conscientious care [...] everything is logical, purposeful and organically deft [...] Briefly recapitulating: The inspiration, the vision, the whole, breaks down during its representation into details whose constructed realisation reunites them into the whole.<sup>70</sup>

The force of the 'idea' dominates the 'style': 'He [the composer] will never start from a preconceived image of a style; he will be ceaselessly occupied with doing justice to the idea. He is sure that, everything done which the idea demands, the external appearance will be adequate'.<sup>71</sup> It is obedience to the inner compulsion and 'idea' that sets apart the artist from the craftsman, as Schoenberg describes:

I believe art is born of '*I must*', not of '*I can*'. A craftsman '*can*' [...] But the artist must. *He has no say in the matter, it is nothing to do with what he wants; but since he must, he also can* [...] This ability is developed from within, under compulsion [...] With his dexterity and adaptability he can apply, as an artistic method, something the creative spirit did unconsciously, when it *forced from the material the effects that matched a need for expression*.<sup>72</sup>

Schoenberg's 'idea' describes the force of an inner compulsion that must be obeyed and fulfilled. From this perspective, Schoenberg and, subsequently, the singer, are at the mercy of

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<sup>68</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, 'New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea', *Style and Idea: Selected Writings*, ed. Leonard Stein, tr. Leo Black, (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1975), 122

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 124

<sup>70</sup> Schoenberg, 'Constructed Music', *Style and Idea*, 107

<sup>71</sup> Schoenberg, 'New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea', *Style and Idea*, 121

<sup>72</sup> Schoenberg, 'Problems in Teaching Art', *Style and Idea*, 365

this 'idea' from which the composition grows. However, the irony lies in the silencing of the 'idea' within scholarly discourses that privilege the rational visibility of 'style'. As Malcolm MacDonald argues:

[Schoenberg's] musical language developed almost instinctively as he strove to express, with even greater precision, the results of a search for truth in personal and artistic experience. Technique was never more than a means to an end; yet technique, being relatively easy to discuss and argue about, became the focus of critical debate.<sup>73</sup>

Schoenberg was aware of his reputation amongst his adversaries who considered him a 'constructor, engineer, an architect, even a mathematician [...] they called my music dry and denied me spontaneity. They pretended that I offered the products of a brain, not of a heart'.<sup>74</sup> This is in part due to the span of Schoenberg's career – atonal expressionism signified the late Romantic period while indicating towards the dissonant precision of serialism to come. Schoenberg's compelling and passionate imagining of the 'idea' offers particular opportunities for a performer. Schoenberg writes:

It is not the heart alone which creates all that is beautiful, emotional, pathetic, affectionate, charming; nor is it the brain alone which is able to produce the well-constructed, the soundly organised, the logical, and the complicated. First, everything of supreme value in art must show heart as well as brain. Second, the real creative genius has no difficulty in controlling his feelings mentally; nor must the brain produce only the dry and unappealing while concentrating on correctness and logic. But one might become suspicious of the sincerity of works which incessantly exhibit their heart; which demand our pity; which invite us to dream with them of a vague and undefined beauty and of unfounded, baseless emotions which exaggerate because of the absence of reliable yardsticks.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> MacDonald, *Schoenberg*, 108

<sup>74</sup> Schoenberg, 'New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea', *Style and Idea*, 121

<sup>75</sup> Schoenberg, 'Heart and Brain in Music', *Style and Idea*, 75-75

While Schoenberg designates his compositional output as reflecting a synthesis of heart/brain, the hybrid of scrupulous precision and emotional abandon very accurately captured my challenges as a performer.

In my hopes for 'correctness', I became fixated on 'technical' aspects, focusing my attention to the musical detail and markings, as well as the vocal requirements of realising the score. By focusing on the internal organisation of my physiology, in accordance with the vocal score and its demands, I was taking conscious control over the forces of my body to ensure precision and accuracy, or a 'correct' realisation of the score. In other words, I was submitting myself to the self-flagellation under Schoenberg's whip. This process of monitoring is necessary in a practice room – a singer, or instrumentalist, needs meticulous attention to detail to engage with the score and prioritize command over her instrument to produce the most compelling communication possible. My own process, which I am sure is shared by most developing singers, is directed towards security of 'vocal technique'. This is so that I can manage the difficulties of Schoenberg's song from a 'technical' perspective, while generating interpretation and colour through the different qualities of vocal production built upon a solid technical foundation. With such attention to detail and self-monitoring playing a fundamental role in everyday practice, I have found it increasingly difficult to abandon self-policing practices in performance. Fixation of mental faculty on monitoring and improvement is not necessarily conducive to a physical or emotional release into the music, which I consider to be fundamental in musical performances, but of particular important to a song cycle of this emotional intensity.

Having recognised these difficulties, I worked on methods of 'release' in both practice and performance situations. I worked on engaging with George's text through 'clowning', speaking the poems in German and play acting every emotional cue and subsequent physical impulse in a highly exaggerated and stylised fashion.<sup>76</sup> Acting on impulse in an exaggerated way enabled

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<sup>76</sup> My experiences of clowning involved highly exaggerated gestures and movement to 'act out' each idea within the text. This can be as simple as gesturing to the sky, to show 'under the protection of dense leaves' (song I), or as dramatic as accompanying each gesture with whole

a playful engagement with complex poetry. I was then able to 'tone down' of gestures and markers of expression to more refined and subtle movements. I used physical activity as a distraction and as a way of ensuring that I was physically engaged - for instance, running up and down stairs then immediately singing was a fool proof method of getting 'out of my head' and 'into my body'. To increase the regularity of performance experiences, I took up every opportunity to be involved in performance practices outside of art song performance - this included an acting roles, musical theatre and operatic performance.



While I will discuss tensions between technical obedience and emotional abandon in relation to my experiences of vocal technique in the next chapter, I am interested in a challenge that is unique to the performance of song cycles, more generally - the transition between songs. I formulated an emotional schema separating the fifteen songs into smaller sets that informed by my musical and textual interpretation, enabling practical and calculated ways of dealing with challenges posed by the score. Reflecting on my performance through audio and videoed recording, the moments of transition between songs were particularly illuminative. Transitions between both individual songs and designated song sets lie outside of Schoenberg's 'music itself'. My expressions of agency are audible and visible, as inhalations and exhalations lead transitions between songs, characterising shifts of intent and emotion.

To illustrate this idea, I focus on songs VI, VII and VIII (8.28-11.49).<sup>77</sup> Within the emotional journey of the cycle, this song set precedes consummation, reflecting the peak of intense desperate sexual arousal that remains unfulfilled. Each song begins almost directly in unison with the piano, and while the pitching is not particularly difficult, each entry requires

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body, physical actions and expressions that accentuate the mood. For instance, to accompany this gesture, I playfully explore the spontaneous communication of 'ominous reverence', with highly exaggerated movement and facial expressions to 'externalise' interpretation very clearly.  
<sup>77</sup> Please note that all musical examples provided are taken from Arnold Schoenberg, *Das Buch der hngenden Grten* (London: Universal Edition, 1919) 1-37. For a full version of the score, please see:  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/Das\\_Buch\\_der\\_h%C3%A4ngenden\\_G%C3%A4rten,\\_Op.15\\_%28Schoenberg,\\_Arnold%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/Das_Buch_der_h%C3%A4ngenden_G%C3%A4rten,_Op.15_%28Schoenberg,_Arnold%29)>. Page numbers attached to included quoted examples are from this online score. See songs VI-VIII, 12-17. Please note that I also include a videoed recording of my recital to accompanying this exegesis. I include the timings of examples in brackets and musical examples within the body of the text for the ease of the reader.

emotional intent that differs from the ending of the previous song. In Song VI, the d#'' can be pitched from the final note in the penultimate bar. I found it difficult to transition from a pianissimo a' to d#'', a tenth higher at a forte volume, and uncomfortably close to the second passaggio for a soprano voice.<sup>78</sup> However, as I mentioned in my introductory section, I trained myself to feel confident pitching d#'' and this ensured I could concentrate on the emotion shift from the active verb 'probing' (V) to 'desperately'. My transition involves a page turn with the gesture leading to an audible inhalation (8.28).



	
Song V ends	Song VI begins

Similarly, the ending of song VI decrescendos from pianissimo at a low pitch prior to a higher forte entry – in this case, the pitch is simply an octave higher. Following the final utterance of song VI, the inhalation leads continuously into 'Angst', connecting active verbs of 'desperation' and 'wailing', and I employ a sharp page turn as part of the characterisation of the phrase.

	
Song VI ends	Song VII begins

<sup>78</sup> For discussion of vocal registers in the soprano voice, see Scott McCoy, *Your Voice, An Inside View: Multimedia Voice Science and Pedagogy*, (New Jersey: Inside View Press, 2004), 73

Audible inhalation and exhalation end song VII with a slight break before song VIII where I clear my throat slightly. I respond to the abrupt shift in emotional intent with a very quick, shallow breath, pitching off the C# in the bass that begins song XIII. Given the extremely fast pace of this song, there is very little time to 'think' about the pitch. From this perspective, it felt as though I was 'forced' to respond instinctively.<sup>79</sup> As I sing across phrases as to not take unnecessary breaths or disrupt the pace of the song, there is a feeling of uncomfortable shortness of breath. What I particularly enjoyed was that this discomfort channelled into the characterisation, invoking a sense of manipulation and confrontation – 'judge yourself, if I deserve such anguish?' I discuss the vocal qualities of both XII and XIII in the next chapter.

		
Song VII ends		Song VIII begins

Breath is an important part of the transition from song VIII to IX; within my interpretation, Song VIII is an externalisation of internal emotion that is expressed 'outside' of her gaze, as I am 'unsteadily learning outside'<sup>80</sup>, while IX is dedicated to convincing her that just one kiss cannot satisfy their sexual desire. My breath immediately slows and becomes more audible over the piano introduction, and I visibly breathe through an open mouth.

This process of breaking up the song cycle into smaller sets enabled calculated transitions was useful both pitching and in activating different emotional intentions for each song. However, in

<sup>79</sup> It is worth mentioning that although my abilities in pitching drastically improved, I found it more difficult to have the same security lower in my range. With the qualities of a lighter soprano voice, I had to work extensively on my lower range in order to sing this cycle and felt less 'in control' of where the lower notes were placed within my voice at this range.

<sup>80</sup> Stratford, 3



performance, s audible and visible inhalations and exhalations that were spontaneous signified personal agency within performance. The use of audible breath transforms moments of scored 'silence' into a source of feminine agency, communicating the emotional interpretation of a performer in sounds that are noisy, instinctive, and reflect a deeply felt visceral experience. These sounds do not 'disobey' Schoenberg's score – they are not written into the cycle, therefore they impart no violation. However, they did 'disobey' my vocal training. I had practiced quiet breathing because I considered this to be more 'technically correct' in terms of my vocal production, and this was a comment that emerged within my examination report as 'something to watch'. However, within the moment of performance, when my primary goal was expression of the text, this was an instinctive act of expression. I was responding 'in the moment' to personal musical and emotional instinct, prizing emotional abandon over vocal technique and letting go of compulsively self-policing the silencing of my breath. By considering breath and transitions between each song, I was able to consider aspects bodily utterances of emotional abandon that lay outside of the score and direct communication of the text.

I have approached Schoenberg as both disciplined and discipliner, with both whip in hand and under its lashing, to firstly set up the tensions of obligation in the context of the composer. Schoenberg felt 'forced' to follow an inner compulsion that worked against his artistic education; the follow through of the 'idea' was precisely realised with a 'style' that demands complete obedience from a performer. In concentrating on Schoenberg's 'idea', I explored the instinctive aspects of emotional abandon outside of the 'music itself', breaking apart the self-policing of silent breath in performance and using physical methods, such as 'clowning', to access and externalise personal instinct in the rehearsal process. With the reception of this work focusing on discourses of violence and the disruption to the 'natural' social and tonal order that chromaticism and dissonance posed, I explored how spontaneous audible breath was an act of feminine sexual agency, breaking apart regimes of self-policing silent breathing, and disrupting 'technically correct' approaches that suppress sexual excess of the feminine body by restraining the breath of the female singer.

### Whipping out of submission: experiencing tactics and agency through classical vocal technique

My discussion of classical vocal technique has thus far aimed to contextualise my experiences of studying voice within a tertiary institution, applying Foucault's 'political anatomy' of docility to position classical vocal technique as a process of literally embodying internal disciplinary coercion at the level of the vocal mechanisms, reflective of increased aptitude and increased domination. In this chapter, I situate vocal resistance to disciplinary coercion through signs of individualisation that are organised by 'tactics'.<sup>81</sup> The very act of constructing 'tactics' works against traditional representations of female vocality that involve the submission of the female voice to the realm of the irrational and emotional, and the female voice subjected to submissive status in the power relationship of male composer/female vocalist. By disrupting 'domination', I explore disobedience and abandon within the 'limits' of classical vocal performance.

Foucault introduces the ideas of an individual being measured against regimes of disciplinary power, enforced through the construction of 'limits'.<sup>82</sup> The actions of each individual are compared and differentiated, according to ruling principles; individuals are measured in quantitative terms and hierarchised according to the value of their abilities, their level of aptitude and their subsequent 'nature'. These value-giving measures ensure 'the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved'; a prescription culminating in the formulation of 'limits' that define difference in relation to all other differences.<sup>83</sup> The consequence is a 'perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institution' as it 'compares, differentiates, hierarchises, homogenises, excludes and *normalises*'.<sup>84</sup> The significance of Foucault's 'limits' in application to vocal technique has several layers. The singer

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<sup>81</sup> See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 162-169

<sup>82</sup> See Foucault's discussion of punishment in disciplinary regimes, 182-3

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 183

must monitor her own body in accordance with limits of repertoire and genre; however, by endorsing 'appropriate' vocal production for the given circumstances, she will be measured against the standards that govern 'appropriate conduct'. In effect, she will submit her own voice to a level of standardisation, subject to punishment that is both self-imposed and imposed upon her through assessment criteria. Measurements of 'deficiency' are thus measured against the standards that inform the orders of singing Western art music, positioning her voice in accordance to the composer and genre as well as the canon of Western art song more generally.

However, this perspective works against a fundamental assumption that informs the basis of meaningful performance, and I consider this to be of particular importance to a student on the cusp of entering into the first level of professional music-making outside of a University context: a performer must be skilled, so that she is malleable in accordance with the wishes of others, and she must be distinctive, so that she can be distinguished through her 'difference'. She must be obedient, in the sense of 'technically' having command and security over her own instrument; she must recognise 'appropriate' boundaries and imposed limits of her disciplinary regime. But she must be also be disobedient so that she is distinguishable; she must push the boundaries, just enough, so that she sets herself apart from the rest.

I discuss the construction of 'tactics' by drawing upon my experiences of learning Estill Voice Training, supported by Scott McCoy's *Your Voice: An Inside View*, which focuses on learning and teaching singing through voice science. 'Estill Voice Training' systematically separates the relationships between the larynx and the vocal tract to produce six different vocal qualities – speech, falsetto, sob, twang, opera, and Belting.<sup>85</sup> Lisa Golda, a Teaching Artist for the Chicago Opera Theatre, who participated in the Level One and Level Two Estill Voice Training courses, writes about her experiences in *Classical Singer*: 'We did sing like boisterous party guests (speech/belt quality) – and then like an innocent child (falsetto), like a teasing 'nyah-nyah' bully (twang), repentantly and remorsefully (sob), and like a "proper" singer (operatic). It was

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<sup>85</sup> Jo Estill, 'Voice quality in singing: An acoustic, electromyographic, and glottographic study', *Acoustical Society of America*, 73, (1983)

interesting to hear how quickly we were able, in a moderate range, to recognize and imitate all of the “recipes” for basic vocal qualities’.<sup>86</sup> Kim Steinhauer, founding partner and president of Estill Voice International, explains: ‘Estill is a language [that gives singers] the words to express what they were doing in their classical vocal technique based on what was happening in their bodies with the anatomy and physiology. It’s a translator’.<sup>87</sup> Steinhauer explains the first two levels taught to participants: ‘Level One is voice from the ‘inside-out.’ We do isolate the anatomy and physiology responsible for salient changes in the singer’s vocal colour or timbre. However, Level Two addresses the voice from the ‘outside-in’. We start with the vocal colour as a whole and then study the acoustic, perceptual and, finally, physiological properties of each voice quality.’<sup>88</sup> The fundamental opportunity of Estill Voice Training is that singers learn to control the vocal mechanisms in isolation that are then formed together as a ‘recipe’. A singer is able to break down how she is physiologically forming vocal qualities. Through this isolation, a singer can choose to enhance particular aspects of each quality. She is essentially armed with a tool kit of vocal qualities that enable her to actively take control of the production and qualities of her own voice through this specialist knowledge.

This physiological, voice-science approach is useful in exploring the formulation of ‘limits’ in vocal production and illustrates how training in vocal technique simultaneously increases aptitude while providing singers with tools of resistance. In his discussion of ‘individuality’ and ‘tactics’ in disciplinary regimes, Foucault writes:

Discipline creates out of the bodies it controls four types of individuality, or rather an individuality that is endowed with four characteristics: it is cellular (by the play of spatial distribution), it is organic (by the coding of activities), it is genetic (by the accumulation of time), it is combinatory (by the composition of forces). It draws up tables; it prescribes movements; it imposes exercises; lastly, in order to obtain the combination of forces, it arranges ‘tactics’. Tactics, the art of constructing, with located

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<sup>86</sup> Lisa Golda, ‘Deciphering Vocal Technique with the Estill Voice Training’, *Classical Singer* (August 2010), 28

<sup>87</sup> Golda, ‘Deciphering Vocal Technique with the Estill Voice Training’, 29

<sup>88</sup> Lisa Golda, ‘Deciphering the Estill Vocal Method Itself’, *Classical Singer* (July 2010), 33

bodies, coded activities and trained aptitudes, mechanisms in which the product of the various forces is increased by their calculated combination are no doubt the highest form of disciplinary practice.<sup>89</sup>

The singer's body is her instrument; as she grows and changes, her voice will too. Training is developed over an accumulation of time and practiced into the muscle memory of each singer through repetition. Spatial distribution is dependent on the physiology of each individual body. While presumably singers are working with the same biological parts, each individuals own make-up is different. With singing being produced directly from within the body, physiological differentiation matters – for instance, the sound produced by a classical singer is going to be affected by a range of factors, including genetics (such as face and jaw shape, natural position of larynx, and vocal fold mass), habitual attractor state (which are variable tendencies such as postural alignment or spoken accent), and each unique musical background and training. Scott McCoy explains, as he likens the voice to a trumpet, for the singer, 'The power source is the breath. The vibrator is a pair of vibrating folds of tissue (the vocal folds). The resonator is the vocal tract itself'.<sup>90</sup> The vocal tract essentially creates a play space for 'free resonance', resulting from 'vibration of air molecules and reflections of sound waves' within the hollow tube of the vocal tract essentially providing hard surfaces that easily reflect sound waves.<sup>91</sup> The vocal tract is divided into four parts; through the act of singing, the size of the resonating chamber will change on a structural level, resonant frequencies are created each time the relative diameter of the vocal tract changes, and this process is affected by movements of the tongue, jaw, soft palate, and pharyngeal wall.<sup>92</sup> Spatial distribution applies on a literal level to the vocal tract as a singer learns to 'lengthen' and 'widen' this space to make the most of her own unique capabilities of resonance.

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<sup>89</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 167

<sup>90</sup> McCoy, *Your Voice, An Inside View*, 27

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 28

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 36

The coding of activities applies to the isolation of particular vocal mechanisms, taught in isolation and combination, categorised in terms of voice qualities, and used to generate particular vocal effects. As I have indicated, Estill Voice Training helps students to understand the physiology behind designated voice qualities, using imitation of particular gestures as a basis, such as speaking 'repentantly and remorsefully (sob)'.<sup>93</sup> As McCoy describes, within the larynx, the 'thyroarytenoid muscles are responsible for shortening and thickening the vocal folds and are dominant during the production of low-pitched and loud sounds, while the crico-thyroid muscles are responsible for stretching and thinning the vocal folds and are dominant in the production of high-pitched sounds.'<sup>94</sup> The remorseful 'sob' involves the tilting forward of the Thyroid cartilage ('tilt') and the lowering of the larynx ('sob'), which changes the intensity and volume of the sound.<sup>95</sup> As McCoy explains, the lowering of the larynx affects the acoustics of the sound, 'with all formant frequencies being uniformly lowered. This results in a darker, rounder sound'.<sup>96</sup> An example of 'sob' can be heard in the song VI with the phrase 'kamen Kerzen das Gesträuch entzünden' (1.33-1.43), particularly, the words 'Kerzen' (candles) and 'entzünden' (ignite). For less intensity, the singer can tilt the Thyroid cartilage forward without lowering its position, assuming a silent 'cry' position. This is particularly important for higher singing at a soft volume, requiring the crico-thyroid muscles to stretch and thin the vocal folds. Throughout the cycle, I focus on this quality of voice production for several reasons. The 'cry' enables the shimmer of a consistent vibrato; it is a sweeter sound, due to the stretch of the thinner folds, enabling production of a resonant and soft quality. Within my voice, a phrase such as,

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<sup>93</sup> Golda, 'Deciphering Vocal Technique with the Estill Voice Training', 28

<sup>94</sup> McCoy, *Your Voice, An Inside View*, 65, note 8

<sup>95</sup> See McCoy's chapter on phonation for detailed explanation regarding the larynx, vocal fold mass and closure, volume and sound intensity, *Your Voice, An Inside View*, 107-131

<sup>96</sup> McCoy, *Your Voice, An Inside View*, 129



requires 'cry' rather than 'sob' for the E-natural – this enables my voice to move through the phrase without too much weight while producing the soft dynamic (7.47).<sup>97</sup> A voice will naturally gain more resonance in the higher range so actively increasing the volume is unnecessary. This kind of tactical consideration was vital throughout the song cycle to manage the varying intensities required, vocally and emotionally; by using 'cry', I was able to present a range of dynamics, in adherence with Schoenberg's markings on the score, while capturing a sweet innocence in longing, as per my interpretation: 'so I can lay down my cheek [as a footstool beneath her soles]'. I used this quality to contrast key moments in text, for instance in Song XII (19.55-20.26):<sup>98</sup>



This phrase, 'and do not reflect that the white sand outside the city is ready to sip our warm blood', signifies the external threat and the catalyst to begin separation from the lover and disintegration of paradise. The previous phrase is intensely coloured with the threat of 'the watchers who may separate us' and my breathing is audible before a moment of stillness and brevity. I use the onomatopoeic qualities of the text, prolonging the 'sch' and 's' sounds in

<sup>97</sup> See Song V, 11

<sup>98</sup> See Song XII, 27

‘Stadt’ (city), ‘weisse’ (white) and ‘schlürfen’ (sip) to create the sense of an ominous threat and hushed whispers, using crisp diction and precise rhythms.

Within these processes of bodily discipline, I am disciplined by the technical demands of singing the pitch and text as written while disciplining myself in adherence with my interpretation of the music itself and the text. This latter aspect of self-disciplining is a source of empowerment – as a singer, I am able to make decisions and formulate ‘tactics’, communicating my unique interpretation of the cycle and drawing upon a range of options in quality and colour developed through my training in vocal technique. In performance, some of these aspects are ‘practiced in’ and some are spontaneously generated in the moment.

Simultaneously, I am bound by the ‘limits’ of Western art song performance that govern ‘appropriate’ vocal productions for the style and context. Prescribed ‘tactics’ are predetermined by a disciplinary method of vocal training – for example, Estill Voice Training use loaded terms such as ‘cry’ and ‘sob’ alongside voice science, while Scott McCoy’s approach essentially describes the same physiological processes without these particular accessible and emotive terms. I found it particularly interesting to take note of the moments where I produced sounds in performance that had not been ‘tactically’ worked out in advance and when these sounds worked against my perception of the disciplinary limits of classical vocal production.

To contrast experiences of ‘pre-emptive’ tactical utterances that stretched my perception of prescribed limitations with spontaneous emotional abandon, I draw upon examples from songs XII and XIII.<sup>99</sup> The text in song XII refers directly to signs of distress: ‘Anxiety and hope oppress me in alternation, my words are prolonged into sighs, I am afflicted with such impetuous longing [...] tears soak my bed’.

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<sup>99</sup> See song VII, 14-17





My interpretation of the vocal line is that the pitch and contour vividly capture the sound of wailing and I emphasise these qualities in performance. This contrasted with my vocalisations of song VIII where unplanned audible releases of the breath (11.31-11.37) capture a sense of gasping urgency and abandon inspired by 'hot with fever' (fieberheissen):



I use more weight in the lower register of my voice, generating volume and a rawness of quality at 11.19 with the text 'gehöre' (since I have *belonged* to you) and 11.22-11.28 with the phrase 'Richte, ob mir solche Qual gebühre' (Judge whether I deserve such torment). A combination of these forces is produced in XV with the penultimate line of the cycle, 'Draußen um des edens fahle wänd' (around the walls of Eden) as the Garden disintegrates (25.08-14):<sup>100</sup>



<sup>100</sup> See song XV, 31-35

According to Foucault's theory, the body is at its most 'docile' when under the highest form of disciplinary coercion. Through systematic methods, an Estill-trained singer develops her unique voice through a complex interplay of codified activities that inform efficient use of individual physiology and pre-determined combinations of tactical forces, such as 'cry' and 'sob'. A singer may then take control of these tactics, using them to communicate her own interpretative voice, forming a complex relationship between freedom and conformance in relation to existing disciplinary practices. Furthermore, she will use these tactics to compensate for her 'deficiencies'. To do so, she will break down any issues and determine which parts of her body and vocal technique require the strictest vigilance and regulation. She will internalise disciplinary regimes that encourage markers of 'individuality' to work in accordance with standardised practices. However, in doing so, a singer effectively stamps out her unique markers of individuality because they are seen as 'deficiencies'. Essentially, a singer is consistently working to remove the threat of her own disobedience of socially- and culturally-imposed orders. In her self-possessed quest to achieve 'perfection', the very processes of disciplinary coercion are standardised as she embarks on the neutralisation of 'deficiency' markers.

Vocal examples of this process include training in languages where a singer will work towards neutralisation of spoken accent to ideally bear no trace of a learned, habitual accent in order to deliver the most correct diction, in alignment with linguistic training. A singer may also work to 'match' each vowel, using exercises that match all vowels against a home-base vowel, which the singer (and her tutor) determine to hold the 'best placement', synonymous with the 'best harmonic structure'. While each vowel has its own unique formant – its own quality and colour – the singer will police herself so that every other vowel is aligned with this prized position. She will focus her attention on disciplining the delinquency of any mismatched vowels. Each vowel will still remain distinctive, but there will be a sense of uniformity and evenness, enabling legato line and consistency in vocal tone, at least from vocalic perspectives. What is particularly important about homogenisation and divergence in vocal performance, more generally, is that these processes and disciplinary practices are internalised through

disciplinary coercion and often naturalised. Furthermore, when inherent standardisation forms the basis of what success is measured against, what are the implications for a young singer?

A visible sign of disobedience and individualisation is a subconscious habit of playing with my skirt during performance – this has, of course, been noted and read by tutors and colleagues as a ‘sign of anxiousness’ and ‘distracting for an audience’<sup>101</sup>. This small but persistent gesture stems from self-imposed resistance to superfluous gesture but also evokes resistance of the other extreme – to be still. While this could be read as a ‘tic’ that requires monitoring and correction, it is more useful to consider how this reflects self-imposed suppression and restriction of movement. This indicates an area that I can work on as a performer, but instead of stamping it out and suppressing a sign of individualisation, I could approach this tactically – for instance, draw upon this gesture by building it into characterisation, creating distinctive new associations, and developing this as a learning tool to explore greater freedom of movement and gesture in performance.

Resistance is enacted through a critical reading of my own performing body as I interweave experiences of discipline and agency into my singing performance as well as on paper. The visible signs of individualism in my performance work against ‘docility’ as I tactically work within and against self-imposed ‘limits’. I have expanded on the tension between increased aptitude and domination by exploring the ways a singer employs already-existing tactics in vocal technique alongside her own interpretations. What I have not yet considered is how this engages with ideas of feminine ‘agency’ in terms of socio-cultural constructions of ‘the voice’. Moving forward, I explore ‘the voice’, Song X, and resistance, focusing on the experiences of the female body in performances of gender and drawing upon wider socio-cultural contexts and feminist literature.

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<sup>101</sup> I am a tactile person who ‘self-soothes’ through touch, subconsciously stroking material in a situation that stimulates anxiousness. Interestingly, this was not so prevalent in the Korngold or Berg cycles.

### Stimulating political anatomies in Song X: arousing her 'moist mouth'

Within feminist scholarship, it is widely circulated that the cultural formulation of sexual difference attaches particular social meanings to gendered qualities and reinforces patriarchal constructions of 'femininity'. In *Embodied Vocality: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones discuss how vocal gendering is the interplay between anatomical differences and socialisation into culturally prescribed gender roles, generating contrasting possibilities for expression within a given society.<sup>102</sup> Dunn and Jones argue that in feminist literature, the 'voice' has been a metaphor for textual authority, signifying aspirations for 'cultural agency, political enfranchisement, sexual autonomy and expressive freedom, all of which have been historically denied to women'.<sup>103</sup> Their project is to address the physical, concrete dimensions of the 'literal, audible voice as a site for women's silencing, as well as an instrument of empowerment'.<sup>104</sup> Dunn and Jones argue:

The anchoring of the female voice in the female body confers upon it all the conventional associations of femininity, with nature and matter, with emotion and irrationality. More concretely, it leads to associations of the female voice with bodily fluids (milk, menstrual blood) and the subsequent devaluation of feminine utterance as formless and free-flowing babble, a sign of uncontrolled female generativity. Such associations further point to the identification of woman's vocality with her sexuality: like the body from which it emanates, the female voice is construed as both a signifier of sexual otherness and a source of sexual power, an object at once of desire and fear.<sup>105</sup>

As I have discussed, through the acts of bodily discipline involved in classical vocal training and obedience to the score, the female singer controls the internal mechanisms of her own voice, working under the authority of the composer as well as the social and cultural conditions

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<sup>102</sup> Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones (eds.), *Embodied Vocality: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Bonnie Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women: The Power of Song in Early Modern Italy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3

of her training, as enforced by personal disciplinary vigilance. McClary's argument for the relationship between 'atonality' and 'feminine sexual excess' challenges assumptions of prevailing rationality and intellect. Yet, through the very act of disciplining her own body using Estill, a singer engages with 'rational' frameworks that militate prescriptions of irrational or emotional excess.

The crucial difficulty is this: a singer must negotiate technical precision of the score while producing emotional abandon. To explore this, my approach is to appropriate Foucault's 'political anatomy' by connecting the singing voice with female genitalia and exploring practices of self-silencing. Schoenberg's song X – which marks the moment of consummation through highly erotic poetry – is an overt objectification of the female body, and, as Julie Brown argued, 'woman's body is something in which man is lost'.<sup>106</sup> This enclosed space, a political anatomy of her body, is under the threat of the 'watchers' outside of their sanctuary. With the aim of returning agency to the female singer, I position this objectification by drawing upon Bonnie Gordon and Suzanne Cusick's discussions of sexualised vocal mechanisms in relation to cultural constructions of the 'feminine' body. I explore the self-silencing and policing of her reproductive body through 'ruptures'<sup>107</sup> in docility that transform the political anatomies of voice and genitalia; with this perspective in mind, Schoenberg's song cycle works against attempts to silence and regulate the singer's voice and body.

In *Monteverdi's Unruly Women: The Power of Song in Early Modern Italy*, Bonnie Gordon discusses the sexualisation of female voices in the early modern period, with the mouth, lips, tongue and throat of female singers attached to the female reproductive parts.<sup>108</sup> 'Cold' and 'leaky' female

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<sup>106</sup> Brown, 'Schoenberg's *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten*', 159

<sup>107</sup> I draw upon Jane M Ussher, 'Premenstrual Syndrome and Self-policing: Ruptures in Self-Silencing Leading to Increased Self-Surveillance and Blaming of the Body', *Social Theory and Health*, 2 (2004), 254-272. Ussher describes 'ruptures' from the perspective of breaking through practices of self-silencing; I am fascinated by this idea of breaking apart ideas or socially imposed boundaries, and this term also conjures a very physical image of the bleeding body shredding the lining of the uterus.

<sup>108</sup> Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women*, 'Vocal anatomies: mouth, breath, and throats in early modern Italy', 10-46

bodies were affected by the 'temperature-altering and fluid-exuding act of singing',<sup>109</sup> and, according to Hippocratic gynaecology, 'Renaissance thinkers still endorsed the Hippocratic belief that intercourse deepens a woman's voice by enlarging her neck, which 'responds in sympathy to the stretching of her lower neck''.<sup>110</sup> Cusick explains that while the act of Francesca Caccini producing her singing voice is hidden from view, the 'invisibility of her body's prowess might have seemed to her (and to her listeners) as a way of symbolically preserving the all-important sign of female respectability, the appearance of chastity. Yet, her body's prowess, in itself, might also have been perceived as something like sexual agency.'<sup>111</sup> The sexual agency of her body is heightened by Cusick's inclusion of the culturally assumed connections between the vocal mechanisms and female genitalia:

'Galen likened the passing of air through the throat to the passing of blood through the womb...Indeed, Columbo's 'discovery' of the clitoris's function in female sexual pleasure only adds to the titillating possibilities of the throat-womb connection, for the clitoris had previously been likened to the uvula on the grounds that both flaps of flesh helped control the heat of the 'neck' to which they provided entry. The heat-filled throat of a soprano singer, then, might quite logically have been understood as a space at least metaphorically linked to sexual arousal'.<sup>112</sup>

To include these perspectives on early modern Italian song is certainly problematic in terms of overlaying historical perspectives; however, these arguments form a platform to discuss agency of the female voice. With an explicit connection between pleasure and physical discipline, a singer exerts her own agency through the act of taking control of her own vocal mechanisms.

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<sup>109</sup> Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women*, 5. In discussion of constructions of gender difference, temperature and breath, Gordon writes: 'Less perfect than the deep voice which marked a noble nature, the high soprano voice reflected the imperfections of women who were, as a rule, too cold, too weak, too moist, and generally out of control', 22

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 31-32. Gordon mentions the disciplining of the female voice as follows: 'the raw and natural sounds of talented singers were cultivated, or carefully molded, by composers, singing teachers, and the singers themselves had to manipulate their throats, breath, and minds', 35

<sup>111</sup> Suzanne Cusick, 'A Soprano Subjectivity: Vocality, Power, and the Compositional Voice of Francesca Caccini', *Crossing Boundaries: Attending to Early Modern Women*, Jane Donawerth and Adele F. Seeff (eds.), (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 86-7

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 87

The erotic poetry of Song X thus creates a distinctive opportunity for a female singer to resist processes of docility. The text to the song is as follows:

*Das schöne Beet betracht ich mir im Harren,* I contemplate the beautiful flowerbed as I linger;  
*es ist umzäunt mit purpurn-schwarzem Dorne,* it is enclosed by purple-black thorn,  
*drin ragen Kelche mit geflecktem Sporne* in which flower cups with speckled spurs tower  
*und sammtgefederte, geneigte Farren* and velvet-feathered ferns incline  
*und Flockenbüschel, wassergrün und rund* and fluffy-tufted flowers, watery-green and round,  
*und in der Mitte Glocken, weiss und mild -* and in the centre bell flowers, white and gentle-  
*von einem odem ist ihr feuchter Mund* their moist mouth is of a fragrance  
*wie süsse Frucht vom himmlischen Gefild.* like sweet fruit from the fields of heaven.<sup>113</sup>

When approaching song, I took an overtly sensual approach. In the masturbatory sense, a singer may control each internal gesture using tactical assertion of vocal weight, colour or emphasis. She can essentially generate whatever sound and sensation she pleases, within a given boundary. She will be able to work her own body to the extent that she knows her vantage points – matching each vowel to the most well-placed, heightening her awareness of harmonic and rhythmic ‘anchor points’ within the score, aligning her posture for the most direct engagement with her pelvic floor muscles for support and anchoring. In my performance, I overtly touched my own body, caressing my arm as well as the piano. My exhalations are audible and loose flexibility of movement is particularly obvious in comparison with static rigidity in songs prior to the physical encounter. Another resistant performance could include a lesbian reading, lingering in her flowerbed, ‘in the centre bell flowers white and gentle, their moist mouth is of a fragrance like sweet fruit from the fields of heaven’. Both of these perspectives are disobedient objectifications of the female body that disrupt the implied authority of the male gaze – the latter resists heterosexual readings, while the former

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<sup>113</sup> Stratford, 4. See pages 18-24 of the score, and my performance of song X begins at 13.27. It is useful to watch my whole ‘set’ (IX-XI), from 11.14-18.25.

objectification evokes pleasure for the individual herself, taking pleasure in her own processes of self-disciplining.

With the 'sexual organs' of the female body objectified within this song, I discuss menstruation and the singing voice. While there is an extensive field of research investigating the implications of sexual hormones generated during menstruation on the Western classical singing voice, I briefly engage with this field of study to explore the 'political anatomy' of the voice to connect the female voice with the cervix, and recognise some of the vocal challenges emerging from menstruation. While understandings of the female voice today tend not to explore the literal sexualisation of female vocality at the level of the training of the mechanisms themselves, it is worth pointing out that scientific investigations determine: 'cyclical changes in the mucosa of the vocal folds are similar to those occurring in the cervix of the uterus, since both tissues are physiologically and structurally similar'.<sup>114</sup> From this perspective, Cusick and Gordon's readings of modern vocality strikes a fairly interesting physiological chord in relation to the agency of a classically trained female singer.

Investigations by Filipa Lã & Jane W. Davidson position the larynx as a 'hormonal target organ',<sup>115</sup> and the 'inconsistency of sexual hormone levels across the menstrual cycle... interfere with laryngeal neuromotor movement and sensory thresholds', affecting female classical vocal production.<sup>116</sup> Lã and Davidson provide a detailed survey of investigative studies,<sup>117</sup> focusing on implications at a vocal fold level, as well as laryngeal changes. A 1999 study of 97 voice professionals during ovulation and the premenstrual phase also indicates:

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<sup>114</sup> Filipa Lã and Jane W. Davidson, 'Investigating the Relationship Between Sexual Hormones and The Female Western Classical Singing', *Research Studies in Music Education*, 24/75 (2005), 79

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 75

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 80

<sup>117</sup> See Filipa Lã and Jane W. Davidson, 'Investigating the Relationship Between Sexual Hormones and Female Western Classical Singing', pages 77-80 for a summary of investigations, 80-82 for physiological and psychological effects of varying sexual hormones, and 82-85 outlining implications of the Oral Contraceptive Pill and indicating the necessity for future research in this area.



(i) swelling of the vocal folds, with thickened mucous membrane and loss of capacity of distension during the premenstrual phase of the cycle for the 97 patients analysed; (ii) 71 patients showed dilatation of microvarices in the vocal folds, submucosal vocal fold haematoma and vocal fatigue; (iii) 59 subjects presented a decrease in muscular tone, diminished power of contraction of the vocal muscles, decreased range and vocal fold nodules. Results suggested that during the premenstrual and menstrual periods the laryngeal mucous is thicker, leading to a frequent throat clearing and a decrease in the levels of hydration of the free edges of the vocal folds, so vocal lubrication is reduced (Abitbol, Abitbol, & Abitbol 1999).<sup>118</sup>

Investigations revealed perceptual experiences of hoarseness, breathiness, lack of control, decreased flexibility, and pitching problems, and discussion with singers indicated ‘a strong relationship between vocal tiredness, sensation of heavier voice, loss of pianissimo effects on high notes and loss of vocal support during premenstrual and menstrual phases of the menstrual cycle’.<sup>119</sup> While I recognise that there is extensive research into the effects of sexual hormones on vocal productions, it is useful for training singers to be aware of the implications of these changes and ways they may directly affect vocal production. The physiological effect of menstruation threatens the aptitude that classical vocal instruction instils in an individual, with ease and evenness over changes in register and ‘beauty’ in tone compromised by varying levels of uncontrollability and hoarseness. However, the specialist knowledge of voice-science training enables a singer to work to ‘correct’ and decrease the audibility of ‘deficiencies’. While a singer may not necessarily equate sexual hormones to the cause of a ‘tired’ voice or a hoarse tone, she will be taught to monitor and correct, wherever possible, from the technical toolbox. A particularly versatile exercise is the ‘siren’, which is essentially a very high level of tilt and retraction of the false vocal folds, low air pressure, and a sustained ‘hng’ over the range or in ‘figures of eight’, gently expanding the range of the voice to both high and low extremities. This effectively soothes over the edges of the vocal folds in a non-taxing manner, cleaning up

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<sup>118</sup> Filipa Lã and Jane W. Davidson, ‘Investigating the Relationship Between Sexual Hormones and Female Western Classical Singing’, 79-80

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 81

perceived roughness in the voice. Various studies have also recognised the increased abilities of 'singers', in comparison with 'non-singers', to deal with these inconsistencies as singers work to 'care' for their voices.<sup>120</sup> This illustrates the challenge in meeting 'ideals' of vocal production; measures of self-monitoring, amending and improving imply a level of deficiency or deviance from standards, and correction will only be granted through vigilance and punishment. I emphasise this point because, compared with external disciplining of the instrumentalist, inmate, or a trainee employee, the singer is producing sounds by manipulating internal physiology in a methodical manner that remains relatively 'invisible' to both the singer herself and her audiences. More problematically, because the vocal folds and larynx are in constant flux due to hormonal changes, the singer is at the mercy of her own reproductive system, threatening feelings of self-worth in relation to constructed identities, such as that of a training female singer.

As Jane Ussher argues, premenstrual experiences of distress or anger, connected to experiences of the female reproductive body, generate self-policing practices of self-silencing, self-surveillance, over-responsibility, self-blame and self-sacrifice. These traits are tied to hegemonic constructions of 'idealised femininity' in Western society.<sup>121</sup> Ussher identifies three dominant themes from in-depth interviews with seventy women across the UK and Australia:

The positioning of women as emotional nurturers of others...; the juxtaposition of the 'good' and 'bad' woman – responsible, coping, calm, and controlled, versus – selfish, unruly, angry, and irresponsible (Ussher, 1997, 2002b); and the positioning of woman as closer to nature, with subjectivity tied to the body, a body that is deemed to be unruly or inferior, necessitating discipline and containment (Bordo, 1990; McNay, 1992). These constructions of femininity form the basis for the 'regimes of knowledge' that regulate women's subjectivity through a process of subjectification.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Lā and Davidson, 'Investigating the Relationship Between Sexual Hormones and Female Western Classical Singing', 91-2

<sup>121</sup> Jane M Ussher, 'Premenstrual Syndrome and Self-policing', 254

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 256

These responses reflect perceived failure to meet 'acceptable standards of behaviour women aspire to, and are judged against', and through their disobedience, PMS sufferers position themselves as 'bad', 'introvert', 'out of control', 'irresponsible', 'failing', 'angry', 'anxious', 'depressed', 'irrational', 'intolerant', 'vulnerable', 'irritable' and 'frustrated'.<sup>123</sup> As women temporarily abandon normative practices of self-silencing, these 'ruptures' may invoke pleasure from 'letting go' of self-imposed suppressive control. As one interviewee explains:

I'm like something out of the exorcist – my head spins around! I get cranky and nasty, I know I'm doing it and I get a mild pleasure out of it. I feel the anger flow through my whole body starting from the tips of my toes. I need a release, sometimes ranting and raving, slamming doors, yelling and sleeping helps me (Angela).<sup>124</sup>

While this particular experience of 'rupturing' is indicative of release and pleasure, the body is positioned as a source of blame that 'exonerates women from responsibility for lack of control, allowing her to openly express this fury, and disassociate it from her sense of her 'true' self.'<sup>125</sup> The reproductive body is therefore considered 'disordered, unruly, and deviant, [and so] the outcome of this self-policing is a direct assault on the woman's corporeality – reinforcing the notion of woman as closer to nature, with subjectivity tied to the body, a body that is unruly or inferior, necessitating discipline and containment'.<sup>126</sup>

While Ussher's approach focuses on the self-silencing practices of the menstruating, reproductive body, I expand focus to include the self-policing practices in 'everyday' life that women may participate in to discipline the 'unruly' and 'inferior' aspects of the female body. In the chapter 'Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernisation of Patriarchal Power', Sandra Lee Bartky argues that disciplinary practices aim to produce a body recognisably 'feminine' through regimes and practices that equip the body with specific gestures, postures and

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<sup>123</sup> Ussher, 'Premenstrual Syndrome and Self-policing' 262

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 265

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 266

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 267

movements; these practices display the body as an ornamented surface.<sup>127</sup> For instance, according to such disciplinary regimes, 'ideally, [skin] should betray no sign of wear, experience, age, or deep thought'<sup>128</sup>. Bartky writes:

The very expressions of her face can subvert the disciplinary project of bodily perfection. An expressive face lines and creases more readily than an inexpressive one. Hence, if women are unable to suppress strong emotions, they can at least learn to inhibit the tendency of the face to register them...a piece of tape applied to the forehead or between the brows will tug at the skin when one frowns as a reminder to relax the face. The tape is to be worn whenever a woman is home alone.<sup>129</sup>

This example promotes both emotional restraint and silencing; as Bartky argues, these disciplinary practices stem from assumed bodily deficiency or a feminine body that has been inscribed with 'inferior status' – from this position, 'the 'art' of makeup is the art of disguise, but, simultaneously, this presupposes that a woman's face, unpainted, is defective.'<sup>130</sup> Of course, 'no one is ever marched off for electrolysis at gunpoint'<sup>131</sup>, however, Bartky argues that 'in contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the conscious of most women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgement'.<sup>132</sup> Iris Marion Young's 'Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality' similarly observes how women may 'typically' experience their bodies from a position of perceived inadequacy. In observation of tasks such as sitting, playing sport and carrying heavy objects, women tended to not use their whole bodies for tasks, restricting their movement laterally as well as constricting the amount of space taken up in physical

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<sup>127</sup> Sandra Lee Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power', *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behaviour*, Rose Weitz (ed.), third edition, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 27

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 31

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 29

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 33

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 37

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 34

activities.<sup>133</sup> Young identifies a particular hesitation: 'women often do not perceive themselves as capable of lifting and carrying heavy things',<sup>134</sup> and, subsequently, 'approach physical engagement with things with timidity, uncertainty, and hesitancy' because of an imagined lack of ease and fear of getting hurt.<sup>135</sup> She argues that the culmination of factors 'operate to produce in many women a greater or lesser feeling of incapacity, frustration, and self-consciousness'.<sup>136</sup>

While I have only briefly introduced several different areas of research relating to female experiences, I am particularly interested in the implications on a singing body – when the 'feminine' body is inscribed as 'unruly', 'deviant' and 'deficient', it is ingrained that she will participate in disciplinary practices of self-policing to correct and contain these inadequacies. A singer is trained to work with an instrument that is in constant hormonal flux, dealing with internal changes that affect the very workings of the vocal mechanisms and the sounds produced. Her instrument is her body; a singer self-polices in accordance with the 'ideals of femininity' that Ussher explains, while simultaneously judging her voice against ideals of vocal production and performance practice that are absorbed into her constructed identity as a training singer. During these times when her voice is compromised, she must increase 'monitoring' and 'amending' facilities to contain the traits that disrupt constructed ideals of classical vocal technique. However, pre-menstrual experiences also enables a singer to exploit these 'ruptures' in self-silencing to gain access to emotional depth that would otherwise be silenced – the irrational, emotional, uncontrollable, and wild. Outside of the emotional implications, on monthly basis, a singer becomes accustomed to hearing sounds from her own body that are somewhat less refined or beautiful – in other words, vocalizations she would usually work to 'modify' and 'correct' in her inherent obedience to her classical vocal technique. She might then choose to draw upon sounds usually relegated to the aesthetic margins in order to explore expressivity in her vocal quality. On an emotional level, she thus

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<sup>133</sup> Iris Marion Young, 'Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality', *On Female Bodily Experience: 'Throwing Like a Girl' and Other Essays*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press), 32

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-4

<sup>135</sup> Young, 'Throwing Like a Girl', 33-4

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 34

permits herself to voice emotions that are usually silenced and hidden. From this perspective, emotional experiences of PMS and the vocalic difficulties that female singers deal with on a regular basis can be transformed into empowering experiences, allowing a singer to gain more control over her vocal mechanisms while accessing emotion and sounds that are otherwise silenced and regulated.

In my experience of performing Schoenberg's song cycle, I found it difficult to abandon policing practices in spite of decisive aspirations for physical and emotional freedom. However, my engagement with the scholarship from both Ussher and Bartky imparted permission to examine self-enforced processes of regulation. If I monitor my face to show no wrinkle or sign of tension, I limit the breadth of expressive scope, in effect, neutralising the very signs of individualism and emotional conviction necessary to perform an expressionist work. Furthermore, if I have been conditioned, as Bartky argues, to aim for bodily perfection and to suppress strong emotions, it is quite reasonable that I would find it difficult to permit myself to express these in the privacy of a practice room, let alone in the context of an assessed public recital where the weight of a judging gaze is visible on multiple fronts: audience members, voice teachers, examiners and the video camera.

If I am docile, I am embodying the naturalisation of disciplinary practice in adherence to both 'femininity' and ideals of performance practice in Western art song. These are reinforced and accentuated under the gaze of an audience who will measure my performances of gender, art song, and of Schoenberg's music, against their considerations of 'appropriate' conduct. Furthermore, Schoenberg's cycle involves the objectification of the female body, as performed by a female singer from an implied heterosexual male perspective of the protagonist. If the garden itself is feminine body, under the threat of the external gaze from outside of the garden walls, this complicates these processes even further.

As I objectify my own body and movements through the processes of re-reading my own gestures, vocalised and otherwise, I am critically engaging with 'myself', as an audible and visible object under my own analytical gaze. However, I am writing my own body. I am exploring and problematizing my own experiences and engagement with Schoenberg's cycle. I am performing within and against the lens of docility. I am actively seeking resistance against frameworks that silence and suppress sexual feminine agency. The very act of doing so denaturalises processes of disciplinary coercion and liberates the female voice.

### **Bondage: performing resistance**

My experiences of learning and performing Arnold Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* were shaped by the Julie Brown's suggestion of the female body as an 'enclosed garden'. At the very sight of her, the protagonist enters into servitude to his sexual desire and, as Brown suggests, her body signifies 'sexual excess and debauchery' and 'sexual love and fecundity', reminiscent of Istar, who 'enslaves, subdues and figuratively castrates her innumerable lovers'.<sup>137</sup> From this position, I shaped my interpretation of this work on two words, taken from song VI of the cycle: service and prohibition.

Critical engagement with my learning process and the challenges in performing this cycle stemmed from a difficulty that I believe has particular relevance to training singers – that is, the complex negation between obedience to the score, adherence to the training of vocal technique, and communicating the emotional abandon required for an expressionist performance. Bringing together ideas of 'service', 'prohibition' and the female body, I employed Foucault's 'docile bodies' theory to explore possibilities of agency of the singing female body in performances of Schoenberg's cycle. By focusing on my own experiences of being both disciplined and self-imposing discipliner, I explore the possibilities of resistance within the limits of western art song performance practice, drawing on Cusick's idea of the 'disobedient' and 'disruptive' Other.

In approaching Schoenberg as both disciplined and discipliner with whip in hand and under its lashing, I explore the 'force' of Schoenberg's inner compulsion in formulating the 'idea' or the inspiration of a work, in relation to the precision of 'style' in its scored realisation. My

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<sup>137</sup> Brown, Schoenberg's *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten*, 154-159



experiences were driven by internal tension between complete obedience to Schoenberg's score and the emotional abandon that I perceived was vital to performing this work. By concentrating on Schoenberg's 'idea', I explored the instinctive aspects of emotional abandon outside of the 'music itself', breaking apart self-policing of silent breath in performance, and using methods such as 'clowning' to externalise physical and emotional instinct in my rehearsal process. Critical reception of this work focused on discourses of violence and disruption to the 'natural' social and tonal order, as posed by the chromaticism and dissonance in atonality. Simultaneously, McClary positions atonality as representing the threat of the feminine sexual excess, often silenced in the rational approaches of the analyst. I explored how spontaneous unleashing of audible breath was an act of feminine sexual agency, breaking apart my own practices of self-policing while disrupting approaches that evoke violence upon, and suppression of, the sexual excess of the prohibited female body.

Disciplining the female voice through the instruction of classical vocal technique signifies increased aptitude as well as increased domination; a singer is trained to self-police, monitor and amend, manipulating her vocal mechanisms and the forces of their activity on an internal, physiological level that remains, for the most part, invisible. The very act of adopting rational frameworks for efficient internal organisation of her vocal mechanisms work against traditional representations of the feminine voice, often positioned as irrational and emotional. By the same vocal training that ensures disciplinary limits, a singer builds tools of resistance to free her voice from assumed docility. She is able to use tactical agency to empower her own musical interpretation, working within and against prescribed limits. The performer is consciously or unconsciously working against the 'ideals' that inform her disciplinary practices of self-policing and correction. She may communicate sounds of sexual desire or uncultivated utterances that are usually prohibited or 'inappropriate', according to the 'regimes of truth' that formulate performance practices of a training singer in western art song. Taking pleasure in this complex negotiation between trained manipulation of her vocal mechanisms and internal forces, and the

instinctive communication of these sounds are raw and visceral, is the pivotal step for the self-regulator in working towards in emotional abandon.

Exploring the prohibited female sexual organs of song X that signify moment of consummation, I touch upon broader implications of self-silencing the female body and her emotions, focusing on experiences connected to the menstrual cycle and her 'ruptures'. I position the audible female voice as a site of 'political anatomy' and resistance. This is evident on physiological levels through the similarities between the vocal folds and the cervix as I work against suppressive representations that silence the female voice and her sexuality. The internalisation of disciplinary practices – that is, the monitoring, correcting, and transforming of the feminine body- stem from a position of perceived deficiency. The female singer is consistent as she self-regulates and punishes herself for failure to live up to constructed ideals in vocal performance. However, it is through the very processes of 'rupturing' self-silence, of working against imposed limits, of employing tactics and calculation, of taking control of sexual and vocal political anatomies and representations that empower disobedient, disruptive, and liberating performances for the training female singer. She will write her body through her voice.

Plastic boning moulds soft curves;  
rough edges prick her skin,  
pain keeps her active, vulnerable in her flesh.  
Sweat leaks through material;  
she uses the energy of nervous excitement.  
She grips her hands, pulling at the sides of the skirt –  
she shows us her bare feet  
with a smile of delight and carpet between her toes.  
Her skin is smooth and glowing,  
protected by layers of grease and polish  
that allow her to adopt whatever face she pleases.  
I imagine myself,  
calm, cool, confident,  
in front of an audience,

whip in hand,  
 I'll subject you to my voice,  
 my sound,  
 my body.

To this stage,  
 I'll bring myself.

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