ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Largo Al Factotum from Il Barbiere Di Siviglia by Gioachino Rossini
AUTHOR(S):	Alkire, David P; Turner, Veronica
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ABSTRACT: In an endeavor to master Largo al Factotum from Il Barbiere di Siviglia by Gioachino Rossini, a post-capstone continuation of my voice instruction and technical development, I was faced with many challenges despite a vast amount of familiarity with this art form. Being an extroverted and even boisterous person with a booming voice and a tendency to overblow my sound, I found that I would quite frequently hurt my vocal cords resulting in over-exhaustion, straining, and an inability to complete big arias from start-to-finish. Through repetition of mistakes, I was eventually able to learn how to circumvent this bad habit via an application of good technique. With a heightened skill level and new perspectives, I am now able to perform full-fledged operatic passages among other traditional and contemporary genres easier than ever. My methods focus on tension-free and well-supported breathing and articulation in concert with an emphasis on posture and musicality. My approach is to perform with the utmost concentration on all of these facets, bringing high quality tone, dynamics, color, and natural resonance to the voice but even more importantly to the music. In order to execute this piece properly, I had to essentially become Figaro. By reading not only the character descriptions but also the detailed play synopses from both operas Il barbiere di Siviglia and Le nozze di Figaro, I was able to characterize Figaro into a tangible persona that I related to and understood as well as my own tendencies and desires. In Il barbiere di Siviglia, which happens 3 years before the marriage of Figaro, he demonstrates his role as not only a clever and resourceful servant but also as an admirable common man without nobility. Throughout the operas his trickster personality is reflected in both the libretto and in the music. In this way I was able to provide context to the Italian language in the libretto. Each word has a unique meaning relevant to the story and a unique expression assigned to it within the musical parameters of the phrase. My key findings from this trial-and-error based experiential research are that good quality singing is stress free, unobstructed, and understatedly phenomenal. The humility of the voice is self-evident and needs no idiosyncratic attempts at embellishment. Good quality technique is harnessing healthy, athletic, diaphragmatic energy that appears effortless and organic when executed properly. Through the combination of good, consistent instruction, an open mind, and at least ten thousand hours of dedicated practice, anybody can become a professional opera singer.