UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Reexamining Portamento as an Expressive Resource in Choral Music, Ca. 1840-1940

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Desiree Janene Balfour

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This study reexamines portamento as an important expressive resource in nineteenth and twentieth-century Western classical choral music. For more than a half-century, portamento use has been in serious decline and its absence in choral performance is arguably an impoverishment. The issue is encapsulated by John Potter, who writes, "A significant part of the early music agenda was to strip away the vulgarity, excess, and perceived incompetence associated with bizarre vocal quirks such as portamento and vibrato. It did not occur to anyone that this might involve the rejection of a living tradition and that singers might be in denial about their own vocal past."[1] The present thesis aims to show that portamento—despite its fall from fashion—is much more than a "bizarre vocal quirk." When blended with aspects of the modern aesthetic,

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[1] John Potter, "Beggar at the Door: The Rise and Fall of Portamento in Singing," *Music and Letters* 87 (2006): 538.

choral portamento is a valuable technique that can enhance the expressive qualities of a work. Historical recordings demonstrate its presence in performance by musicians trained up to the early twentieth century. However, within the context of the historically informed performance (HIP) movement, portamento has been a neglected aspect of choral performance practice, overlooking what would have been in the imagination of Romantic-era composers. A correction now seems justified, whereby this "living tradition" is recognized and revived. Indeed, portamento, if reasonably understood and well-practiced, remains a valuable resource in choral performance up to the present day.

The dissertation of Desiree Janene Balfour is approved.

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DEDICATION

This manuscript was completed with the help of my professors, mentors, and closest allies. I am so thankful to have found a relevant topic that I passionately believe in, am fascinated by, and that I find to be genuinely moving. I was not always encouraged when presenting my "elevator pitch" on choral portamento… To those who listened with interest and enthusiasm, thank you. I am so incredibly grateful and humbled by three individuals, Dr. James Bass, Alan Berman, and Raviv Balfour. You have been instrumental in my progress and, ultimately, my success. Thank you for being an unending source of generosity. You filled my days with resources, expertise, ideas, consideration, inspiration, and support.

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CHAPTER I: Introduction

Portamento—an audible carrying or gliding from one note to another—is a familiar

practice in solo singing and in the playing of string instruments, yet notably controversial in the

theory and practice of choral performance since the middle of the twentieth century.[2] For choral

conductors, the handling of portamento raises far-reaching issues. Despite the clear presence of

choral portamento heard in early source recordings, the role of portamento in performance is

typically ignored. The decision to omit portamento reflects modern aesthetic preferences and is

not reflective of what earlier choral music performances sounded like, especially choral music

from the nineteenth century. As Mark Bailey asserts, "Certain distinctive stylistic characteristics

of Romantic-era choral performance are hardly or not at all discussed in the written accounts,

such as choral portamento, stepwise slides, and declamatory articulation, but they are pervasive

throughout the recordings of most professional-level ensembles."[3]

The present thesis project surveys portamento in the broader context of Western classical

music, offers reasons for portamento's fall from favor, examines early source recordings, and

outlines approaches for reinserting portamento into choral performance practice. There are many

nineteenth-century texts on solo playing and singing but very few regarding choral music.

However, it is reasonable to assume that choral performance practice derives from solo treatises.

Early recordings directly echo the portamento instructions found in said treatises; and both

sources explicitly demonstrate the ornament's importance as an expressive device.

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[2] The scope of this thesis project specifically references the Western classical choral tradition.

[3] Mark Bailey, Yale University Library. "Studying Performance Practice Through Sound Recordings: Choral: A guide by Historical Sound Recordings (HSR) on using sound recordings when researching performance practice since the early twentieth century," Accessed September 14, 2017. https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=525668&p=4765919.

This project's analysis of the portamento found in early source recordings focuses on works composed between 1840 and 1940. This date range aligns with the performance practice of players and singers up to the point that portamento began to be deemed distasteful. There are several reasons that the modern choral-conducting tradition neglects portamento and distinguishing why and how portamento fell out of favor is useful for a conductor when making intentional, not habitual choices. The synthesis of this research will produce performance suggestions that will make it possible to place portamento back into the realm of choral performance practice, revitalizing the power of a lost artistic resource in choral singing.

Defining Portamento

What have musicians meant by portamento, from the seventeenth century to the present, and how has portamento been notated? To what extent has this musical practice remained unnotated? Written sources and early sound recordings offer important orientation.

Portamento is generally defined as the technique of audibly gliding from one note to another, in a manner that articulates all of the intermediary pitches between two notes. The term has its Italian roots as meaning "to carry." It may be helpful to consider portamento as having qualities somewhere between a glissando and a "clean" legato, a gliding of pitch that is executed just before the arrival pitch. Indeed, portamento has historically been characterized as a "seamless legato," as "gliding from one note to another," and frequently the term "drag" is employed. Many times, the terms "glissando" and "portamento" are used interchangeably. Therefore, precisely describing the possible differences between portamento and glissando over the course of its history can be challenging. Furthermore, portamento can either ascend or descend, be executed at different rates, and a performer can either crescendo or decrescendo

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during the glide. Lastly, portamento notation, as with many musical markings, has a complex, evolving history rife with contradictions and varying interpretations, uses, and applications.

Clive Brown states, "The term 'portamento' or *portamento di voce* (or its usual synonyms in other languages: in French *port de voix*, in English 'glide' or 'slur,' and in German *Tragen der Töne)* was used in a number of different senses during the period 1750–1900, although all of these, except the English, contain the central meaning of 'carrying' the sound."[4] Brown then goes on to write pages about portamento before deciding on a single definition: "the sense of an audible glide."[5] Not only does Brown address differing regions and their portamento terms, he also discusses how different families of instruments would go about implementing the technique. For example, even though keyboard instruments cannot technically slide, "portamento style" was applied to piano performance to indicate a type of *portato*, a pulsing articulation sounding somewhere between legato and staccato. From the 1700s until the 2000s, there are many accounts of scholars defining portamento; however, there are no definitions that expressly provide instruction about *choral* portamento.[6] Perhaps the most relevant data can be pulled from methods and treatises on solo singing.

The most influential nineteenth-century singing approach had its roots in the *Bel Canto* singing school. Arguably*, Bel Canto* maintained prominence throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and much of the same tenets are still taught in voice studios today.

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[4] Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (Oxford UP, 1999), 558.

[5] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 560.

[6] As an attempt to be exhaustive on the issue of portamento, a table of definitions gathered from numerous resources ranging from 1723 until 2006 can be found in the Appendix, item A.

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Manuel García is considered one of the most prolific and long-ranging contributors to nineteenth-century vocal pedagogy. James Stark's *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* praises García's legacy and is a modern advocate for the traditions pioneered by the teachings of García and his son (likewise named Manuel García), also a vocal pedagogue. The younger García's *Traité* of 1841 was revised many times until the early 1900s. Stark ends his historical account of *Bel Canto* by quoting Blanche Marchesi, who wrote in 1923, "It would be utterly impossible to write anything serious about singing if one did not start with the consecrated name of García. The García family were the founders of the singing school in which knowledge of the physiology of the voice goes hand in hand with all the great traditions of style."[7] Potter and Sorrell also look up to García and suggest that methods and procedures of vocal instruction have primarily remained unchanged. They state, "Despite changes in voices and compositional styles, many aspects of singing teaching continued to be much the same as they have been for generations, but applied with more rigor."[8] Potter and Sorrell note that García's singing manuals were frequently revised to remain up to date with both scientific laryngeal research and recording technologies. "García's writings are detailed and comprehensive, giving us a picture not only of singing in the 1840s, but tradition on which that art was built… [the younger] García survived well into the age of the Gramophone, so he had ample opportunity to revise his work in the light of this technological innovation should he have thought it necessary."[9] Since García and *Bel Canto* techniques are of paramount significance to vocal instruction, they are considered as source materials when examining portamento in singing.

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[7] James Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto UP, 2003), 226.

[8] John Potter and Neil Sorrell. *A History of Singing* (Cambridge UP 2012), 120.

[9] Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,* 122, 123.

Most solo vocal treatises are organized similarly to García's, covering vocal organs,

registers, breath, timbre, portamento, *messa di voce*, ornamentation, rubato, and text articulation.

To illustrate, German-born Heinrich Panofka's 1854 manual emphasized the physiology of the

voice but otherwise followed García's approach. There are "exercises for the joining of registers,

legato singing, various sorts of attack, and portamento."[10] Likewise, the various chapters in

Dodd's 1927 *Practical Hints for Singers* provide choirmasters with all of the same topics. While

portamento had been included as an essential technique for singers prior to the 1950s, it is

virtually ignored in today's conventional singing methods. Interestingly, for as much as Stark

praises García, he does not go into detail about the significance of portamento. Likewise,

Richard Miller and William Vernnard (more recent, successful vocal pedagogues and authors)

manage to address all of the topics as mentioned above, but they do not directly teach

portamento as an expressive device. Whereas vibrato and *messa di voce* are explicitly addressed,

both authors refer to portamento only as a helpful exercise for dealing with registration issues or

as a vibrato-reducing vocalise.

Portamento's rare appearance in scores may contribute to the reduction of its use in

modern vocal instruction. Few composers included notation cues for portamento. The practice

was likely an assumed, inherited tradition of embellishment, thus, unnotated. Barthold Kuijken

remarks, "the absence of articulation markings in a composition basically means that the

performer had to follow the conventional rules of the time and place… the composer was

expected to notate any *exceptions* to these rules because even a well-trained musician could not

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[10] Ibid., 121–22.

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necessarily guess where to go against the conventions."[11] Furthermore, various legato-related

terms and markings have not always been clear. Brown states, "Other expressions, such as *cercar*

della nota, messa di voce crescente, or *messa di voce decrescente,* were used, in relation to vocal

music, to describe specialized ways of connecting notes at different pitches; but as with so much

terminology, the usage of these phrases by different authors is often inconsistent."[12] It is,

therefore, possible that composers avoided specifically notating an ornament that they would

have expected a performer to include at their discretion, especially if the boundaries between

legato, portamento, and glissando were not distinctly defined. As performance practice is

generated by a performer's experience and observation of style within a distinct region and time,

one cannot assume that the absence of a marking equates to an assurance of what the composer

intended, imagined, or heard.

Composers in more recent centuries have become more precise in their notation. Still,

similar to the current performance practice of vibrato, portamento markings are infrequent

despite ample evidence for its use in early recordings. Robert Philip, author of texts that analyze

early instrumental recordings, hypothesizes that some composers observed portamento's fall

from fashion and then started to notate it. He writes, "It is perhaps significant that indications of

portamento which occur occasionally in Elgar and frequently in Mahler, are rarely given by

composers for the late-nineteenth century, such as Brahms, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, or Verdi.

Perhaps this suggests that the habitual use of portamento was perceived by Elgar and Mahler as

being already in decline by the turn of the century, so that they needed to indicate a portamento if

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[11] Barthold Kuijken, *The Notation is Not the Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2013), 55.

[12] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 558.

Figure 1.1. Mahler: Symphony No. 2 "Im Tempo des Scherzos," rehearsal 40, Score, Die Ergebnisse (Universal Edition) 1970, 193.

they wanted to be sure of hearing one."[13] Mahler's inclusion of portamento in his second

Symphony supports Philip's claim (See Figure 1.1). The two portamento markings in Figure 1.1

are assigned to the trumpet in F which plays in unison with the alto soloist on the text, "was du

gesehnt!" ("what you longed for!"). Mahler heightens the nuanced lyric expression of the voice

part by asking for a corresponding subtle intensity from the trumpet player.[14] Further score

markings that late-nineteenth and early-twentieth composers used was "*port.*" or "*gliss.*" These

[13] Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance 1900–1950* (Cambridge UP, 1992), 153.

[14] Interestingly, Mahler neglects to add portamento to the alto solo line. Additionally, there is an absence of portamento markings assigned to any voices throughout Symphony No. 2.

markings were often accompanied by a slur or replaced by a straight or wavy line. After

portamento's decline, composers used portamento as an extended technique, regularly in

correlation with the triggering of nostalgia or to mirror popular or folk-music traits.

There is evidence that some standard notational tools prompted musicians to consider

using a portamento, notably a slur or a grace note. Especially in solo repertoires, portamento

could enhance the delivery of grace notes, both leaping and anticipatory. Martha Elliott's *Singing*

in Style comments on García's instructions about the delivery of grace notes when she writes that

García "recommends a more audible slide between pitches, both distant and close together. He

advises that the character of the words and music should determine the quality of the portamento:

Full and rapid for vigorous sentiments, slower and more gentle for tender and gracious

movements."[15]

Although a slur may also indicate a desire for legato singing or playing—as most

interpret it today—it could also prompt a portamento. In vocal and choral music, slurs often

communicate text execution, principally when more than one pitch is assigned to a single

syllable. In this case, the slur is already communicating two ideas: text and articulatory

instruction. However, the degree of connectedness is not made entirely clear. Furthermore, a slur

also provides phrasing information if it straddles several notes, regardless of the number of

syllables. On occasions where there is a slur connecting just two notes on different syllables, the

composer is likely requesting an intense legato, or a portamento as shown in Edward Elgar's

"Spanish Serenade" (See Figure 1.2). Elliott says, "Slurs marked in vocal music could indicate

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[15] Martha Elliott, *Singing in Style: a Guide to Vocal Performance Practices* (New Haven:Yale UP, 2006), 139.

Figure 1.2. Elgar: "Spanish Serenade," mm. 1–4, from Frederick William Wodell, *Choir and Chorus Conducting: A Treatise on the Organization, Management, Training, and Conducting Of* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1901), 104.

either that a vowel should continue for more than one pitch or that a legato articulation is required. Occasionally portamento was marked specifically in scores, but a slur mark would also indicate portamento, especially if the slur connects two notes with two different syllables."[16]

Adding portamento at every "slur opportunity" would undoubtedly result in too many occurrences of a very singular effect. Indeed, several sources advise against an overuse of the device. Often, there is more written about avoiding too much portamento than about how to use it. For example, Antonio Salieri was a staunch critic of the technique in orchestral playing and is frequently quoted for his comparison of portamento to an incessantly meowing cat. Even treatises that advocate for portamento warn against using the ornament too frequently. García writes, "the circumstances under which the slur [portamento] should be adopted, are very difficult to determine, and can scarcely be fixed by any general rules. Yes, it may be observed that a slur will always be well-placed, whenever, in passionate passages, the voice drags itself on under the influence of a strong or tender sentiment."[17] Despite García's promotion of the portamento, his lack of detailed instruction on frequency of use, dynamics, and intensity, leads

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[16] Elliott, *Singing in Style,* 141.

[17] Manuel García, *García's New Treatise on the Art of Singing* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1800). 55.

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the performer without much to go on. Thus, it becomes a manner of "good taste." Robin Stowell and Colin Lawson report, "Like vibrato, portamento is very difficult to introduce for purely expressive ends without self-consciousness, rather than merely to fulfill instructions."[18] Determining "portamento appropriateness," therefore, would seem to fall into the realm of informed guesswork. This project argues that portamento can be confidently employed in various musical situations without resorting to guessing. To determine guidelines for the effective use of portamento, this paper outlines what specifics *can* be gathered about portamento uses from written and recorded sources.

Since there is little to no current advice about the employment of *choral* portamento, nor is there precise notational guidance, the following will draw from solo and orchestral methods and treatises to create theories as to when and how portamento may have appeared in choral use before the recording era. Like other musical devices, portamento could help underscore the formal structure of a work. Therefore, in addition to word painting and connecting leaps, it is possible to conclude that portamento was used to enhance tempo changes, mark cadences, highlight appoggiaturas, and draw attention to climactic or motivic moments.

<center>Occasions for Employment</center>

Passion-filled texts and phrases in choral music can benefit from the employment of portamento. Additionally, the audible glide of portamento can be used for word painting or for texts with onomatopoetic cues (weeping, sighing, falling, ascending, and similar inclinations) to heighten expression in a manner that would mimic human emotion in speech.

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[18] Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction* (Cambridge UP, 1999), 144.

In 1992, Deborah Kauffman wrote the article, "Portamento in Romantic Opera." Her work cited the vocal treatises of Manuel García and Alexis de Garaudé to support her examination of portamento research in several early recordings of opera singers. Kauffman found portamento to be "more than a manner of execution; it is an expressive device, often introduced in the service of the text."[19] She sampled three recordings of the same work in three different languages and found that, "While some unity of execution points to purely musical reasons for the placement of portamento, a number of interesting divergences clearly show a relationship to language."[20] Other treatises support these findings such as Domenico Corri's, *The Singer's Preceptor,* published in the early nineteenth century. Potter and Sorrel explain how Corri thought of portamento as a useful rhetorical device carried over from prior centuries. They write, "Corri's advocacy of paralinguistic or onomatopoetic sighs and sobs seems startlingly similar to the descriptions of the Renaissance singers of several hundred years earlier, and he envisages the art of speech and the art of singing unified in musical rhetoric. Portamento, for example, is a stylized means of re-creating an expressive aspect of speech that would be missing if notes were simply joined without such an effect."[21] García likewise advocates for the use of every expressive tool at the singers' disposal when he writes, "The series of expressive accents obtained from changes of respiration, and the employment of different timbres, form an inarticulate language, made up of tears, interjections, cries, sighs, and etc., which may be termed the language of the soul. Such exclamations excite as powerful emotions as speech, and form an

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[19] Deborah Kauffman, "Portamento in Romantic Opera," *Performance Practice Review.* Vol. 5:2 (1992): 151.

[20] Ibid., 151

[21] Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,* 101.

Figure 1.3. Mozart: *Don Giovanni,* "Là ci dare la mano," mm.1–4, from Manuel García, *García's New Treatise on the Art of Singing* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1800) 70.

important element in the success of a great singer."[22] This section of García's treatise provides musical examples for numerous sentiments. He adds a slur to indicate portamento to a Mozart score connecting the two different syllables: "ma-no." The word "mano" translates as "hand," an important text-moment in a phrase where Don Giovanni is conversing with Zerlina regarding her hand in marriage. In this example, García labels the sentiment: "Tenderness" (See Figure 1.3). In other words, in addition to text-painting and drawing attention to a significant word within a phrase, portamento can add intensity to passages dealing with topics such as love, seduction, sympathy, or innocence.

Concerning portamento, there are several commonalities between the voice and string instruments. During the nineteenth century, many famous string performers and teachers recommended that players emulate singers. Clive Brown cites both Charles de Bériot's 1858 *Méthode de violon* and Joseph Joachim and Andres Moser's 1905 *Violinschule*: "Bériot drew his examples of portamento initially from vocal music (which provided the basis for much of his treatment of violin playing) and emphasized the vocal nature of the ornament. This was also stressed in the Joachim and Moser *Violinschule*, where it was stated that, 'As a means borrowed from the human voice... the use and manner of executing the portamento must come naturally

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[22] García, *García's New Treatise,* 71.

under the same rules as those which hold good in vocal art.'[23] Likewise, in 1921, Leopold Auer's

Violin Playing as I Teach It advises, "In order to develop your judgment as to the proper and

improper use of portamento, observe the manner in which it is used by good singers and by poor

ones."[24] Conversely, singers can learn from the fingerings found in the scores of string players.

Brown writes,"the employment of portamento in string playing was largely analogous with

singing. This is important for understanding how singers may have used it in various periods, for

while in vocal music there are often few clues as to where a portamento may have been

introduced, the bowings and fingerings in string music are more revealing."[25]

Leaps of larger intervals often require both a singer and a string player to have to

negotiate either register or position shifts. If a passage is to be sung or played in a legato fashion,

portamento can enhance the connectivity of two distant pitches by smoothly negotiating a wide

gap. Indeed, portamento often accompanies a leap to beautify a technical moment where no

break or pause in the sound should be heard. García's "The Art of Phrasing" section of his

Treatise recommends using portamento when changing syllables on high pitches.[26] He advises to

first approach the high note with a portamento rather than managing both the note and the

syllable simultaneously.

Portamento may also have been employed as a convenience without any expressive

rationale. Carl Flesch, a famous Hungarian violinist and teacher, commented on the pitfalls of

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[23] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 580.

[24] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 143.

[25] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 580.

[26] Manuel García, *Garcia's New Treatise on the Art of Singing, Revised Edition,* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1857).

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using portamento as a convenient solution to a position shift. As reported by Robert Philip,

Flesch

> …draws an important distinction between portamentos which are deliberately contrived for expressive effect, and those which are merely convenient: 'In practical teaching I usually stigmatize the kind of audible portamento which is aesthetically inexcusable but technically convenient as "bus portamento"—the cheapest and most comfortable way to move between positions by taking the portamento bus.' In *Violin Fingering* (1944), Flesch gives many examples from violin music illustrating the use of portamento, in many cases comparing fingerings which he recommends with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fingerings which he considers old-fashioned. The earlier fingerings are usually criticized by Flesch because they result in portamentos which are too frequent, which creates false accents, rather than the expressive shaping of the passage."[27]

Certainly an overuse of any embellishment voids any special quality; all the worse if the

perception is akin to laziness. However, the technical advantages of portamento do not eliminate

a leap's importance within the melodic contour of a phrase. If a leap's purpose within a melodic

Figure 1.4. Vaccai, Nicola. *Metodo pratico* (Frankfurt; New York: C.F. Peters, 2002), p. 30. Reprint of Nicola Vaccai, *Metodo pratico de canto italiano per camera* (London: [n.pub.], 1832).

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[27] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 146.

line is to draw attention to a significant moment, portamento can be added to intensify the effect.

For instance, Nicola Vaccai's singing method of 1832 (Figure 1.4) guides singers to add

portamento (despite the absence of a composer's notational instruction) on leaps larger than a

third and also to highlight the highest pitch of a musical phrase. In her article on Romantic

portamento, Kauffman found it remarkably common for opera singers to employ portamento to

the highest note of a phrase and also on leaps of a fourth or larger.[28]

Just as a leap invites portamento, portamento's expressive qualities can also serve to

emphasize a phrase's formal structure. Stowell and Lawson state, "Portamenti served to shape

the melody by calling attention to certain structurally important pitches."[29] In a different

publication Stowell adds, "the glissando and portamento as an 'emotional connection of two

tones' [were used] to articulate melodic shape and emphasize structurally important notes."[30]

Philip likewise commented that celebrated String Quartets (specifically the Busch and Lener

Quartets) used portamento to aid to the understandability of a melody in a polyphonic context.

He suggests they used portamento to, "give a particular feeling of independence to the four

lines… [to] enhance the separate identity of the parts."[31] Jon Finson likewise treats both vibrato

and portamento as an ornament that was used to highlight crucial moments. He writes, "Like the

portamento, then, vibrato was an ornament in nineteenth-century playing used to accentuate

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[28] Kauffman, "Portamento in Romantic Opera," 153.

[29] Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music,* 145.

[30] Robin Stowell, *The Norton/Grove Handbooks in Music Performance Practice: Music After 1600.* ed. Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (New York: Macmillan Press, 1989), 399.

[31] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 171.

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certain pitches, to give shape to a melodic passage, or to call attention to a particular style of writing (cantabile)."[32]

Portamento can help intensify or bring attention to multiple musical components within a work. Before recordings existed, it was essential for performers to employ numerous musical devices to aid the listener's comprehension of a composition that would only be heard *that* way, one time. One critical way to underscore the sections of a piece was to bring attention to cadences. Sarah Potter writes, "Some locations needed the addition of the portamento, in a way that we may now feel a baroque cadence may be desperate for a trill or appoggiatura; the nineteenth-century singer would have expected portamenti in familiar expressive locations. That 'stylistic' rather than 'necessary' portamenti … suggests that 'necessary' portamenti may have gone unnoticed to the nineteenth-century ear.[33]

Tempo, dynamic, meter, and key changes can also mark structural occasions, alerting the listener of new music or to the return of a familiar theme. Portamento can add intensity to these markers. For example, an ascending portamento can have implications of a sound approaching or rushing toward you, increasing in volume. Similarly, just as a train whistle passes and moves farther away, the pitch descends along with the volume and vibration. Referring to a prominent cellist, Philip notes, "portamento is placed to emphasize a move of particular harmonic significance, such as a chromatic shift."[34] Richard Taruskin also commented on the role of portamento in combination with flexible tempi and sensitive dynamics, "By the use of harp

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[32] Jon W. Finson, "Performing Practice in the Late Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to the Music of Brahms," *The Musical Quarterly* 70:4 (1984): 471.

[33] Sarah Potter, "Changing Vocal Style and Technique in Britain during the Long Nineteenth Century," (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2014), 120.

[34] Philip, *Age of Recording,* 169.

glissandos and brass harmonics, Korngold pioneered effects of orchestral portamento—the illusion of continuously sliding pitch to enhance and intensify modulations—that conspired with perpetual tempo rubato and constantly waxing and waning dynamics to produce (in Ortega's sense) the most 'humanized,' and (in Hulme's sense) the most 'vital' orchestral music ever written."[35] Korngold's employment of portamento provides an example of how the artistic resource can enhance textural nuances for great effect.

Potter and Sorrell regard the relationship of portamento and tempo as an aspect of style. They explain, "Changes in micro-tempo—rhythmic inflections within syllables and words—are often what distinguish one performance from another; the most communicative performances are often subtly nuanced, enabling the singer to create an illusion of spoken communication within the singing line. The 'dragging' elements of portamento is therefore likely to be just as important as the nuancing of the pitch; because it involves micro-changes in the rhythmic structure it is impossible to notate conventionally, which perhaps accounts for some of the mystery surrounding its use."[36] Essentially, portamento's lifelike qualities have countless uses and give prominence to musical moments on both macro and micro levels.

In addition to individual nuances, portamento is generally considered more appropriate in slower arias. Garcia goes as far as to identify the subcategory "*canto di portamento*" from within the *canto di maniere* group. Both are "suited to graceful sentiments."[37] Kauffman states, "According to Garaudé, the *Cantabile* aria has a slow, majestic, and simple character; it requires…suppleness and expression in the use of *port de voix*. He applies these same precepts to

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[35] Richard Taruskin, *In Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Oxford UP, 2009), 550.

[36] Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,* 126.

[37] García, *Garcia's New Treatise on the Art of Singing, Revised Edition,* 77.

larghetto, adagio, and *andante* arias…. [Many] authors imply that it is more appropriate to slow than to faster tempos; portamento is linked to the essential characteristics of slow genres, but left unmentioned in the descriptions of faster genres."[38]

The Execution of Portamento

After determining *where* in the music portamento was applied, the next level is deciding its rate and intensity. Applicable questions are: What are the factors in choosing an ascending or descending portamento? What syllable does the portamento inhabit? At what point in the duration of a longer note does one start the audible glide? How fast or slow should the voice move? Does the voice change volume, and if so, shall it crescendo or decrescendo? How frequently should the portamento be used? While definitive, measurable treatise advice is lacking, by examining both string and vocal treatises there are a few—albeit circular—paths toward answering the questions on direction, duration, rate, and volume.

Roger Fredez's article, "Towards a Verdian Ideal of Singing: Emancipation from Modern Orthodoxy," examines what Verdi likely desired from a soloist. He defends Verdi's desire for portamento by citing Verdi's praise for singer Adelina Patti. Patti used portamento frequently, as can be heard in early recordings. Fredez summarizes the vague nature of how to employ portamento when he writes, "Those [recordings] of Battistini and especially Patti confirm that the portamento indeed remained popular in the *Bel Canto* tradition, with both singers displaying an enormous variety in the technique. The amount of time taken by the portamento, the rate of the movement between notes, the accompanying dynamic shading and, contrary to the admonitions of the vocal pedagogues, the placement of the syllable together provide a myriad of

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[38] Kauffman, "Portamento in Romantic Opera," 154.

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ways to approach and quit a note."[39] Clive Brown admits, "While there can be no doubt about the

extensive use of portamento by performers throughout the period, there is greater difficulty in

determining how much and in what sort of places composers themselves might have considered

it appropriate in their music."[40]

Brown also observes that fingerings designating a slide informed string players, but

vocalists had little to no such indicators. Fingerings could provide clues as to when to slide;

however, dynamics were not as explicit. When considering the issue of portamento intensity,

string players were guided to emulate singers! To illustrate, Lawson and Stowell state,

> [Portamento] was already a prominent feature of the technique of some violinists well before
> 1800 and subsequently found its way into orchestral playing, early recordings reflecting a well-
> established approach. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century violin methods discuss both the
> mechanical execution and the artistic use of portamento, though identification of appropriate
> contexts in unrecorded works poses difficulties; for all the detail given (for example) by Flesch,
> recordings reveal no regular practice in this regard. Joachim emphasized its vocal nature: 'As a
> means borrowed from the human voice…the use and manner of executing the portamento must
> come naturally under the same rules which hold good in vocal art.'[41]

Singers' portamenti are described by Auer as being "quite fast and gentle."[42] Quantitatively, "fast

and gentle" is difficult to determine. Furthermore, Philip and Brown report that treatises

frequently advised players to remain within the boundaries of "tasteful restraint."[43] An example:

"Joachim urged restraint in the use of portamento just as he did in respect to vibrato."[44] To

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[39] Roger Fredez, "Towards a Verdian Ideal of Singing: Emancipation from Modern Orthodoxy."
Journal of the Royal Musical Association, 127:2 (2002): 244.

[40] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice,* 580.

[41] Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music,* 144–45.

[42] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 174.

[43] Ibid., 174.

[44] Clive Brown, *Performing Practices in Johannes Brahms' Chamber Music* (New York: Bärenreiter
Kassel, 2015), 12.

instruct a performer to use taste as a guidepost implies pursuing a moveable target guided by

one's interpretation and the collective aesthetic of any given moment, region, and style.

The few vocal composers who did indicate a desired glide in their notation failed to

include fundamental details. Brown provides an example when he states, "Few early nineteenth-

century composers were as explicit as Meyerbeer, whose operas contain many clear instructions

for the employment of vocal segment. What distinction, if any, he may have intended… is

uncertain."[45] Brown is referring to Meyerbeer's notation of a slur plus the instruction "*trainez la*

note" (drag the note).

García carefully provides instruction regarding appropriate modification of the vowel so

that it does not close as the pitch alters. He also delineates which note/syllable to borrow time

from, but he leaves all other details up to interpretation. He recommends, "The time occupied by

a slur [the English translation used to address *con portamento*] should be taken from the last

portion of the note quitted [an anticipatory grace]; and its rapidity will depend on the kind of

expression required by any passage in which it occurs."[46] He also advises, "The second note

ought to be heard twice – once on the first syllable, and again on its own."[47] Sarah Potter outlines

Nicola Vaccai's recommendations of two types of graces when she writes,

> Vaccai (1832) described how these two types of portamento differ in their treatment of the text:
> Portamento, which means "carrying" the tones, can be executed in two different ways: 1) by
> Anticipation i.e., by continuing the vowel of one note into the commencement of the next note
> [...]. By discrete use of this method, a fine effect can be obtained in the interpretation of phrases
> requiring a graceful manner and depth of expression; its abuse, however, invariably results in a
> mannered, and monotonous style of singing, 2) by posticipation, i.e., by almost imperceptibly

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[45] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice,* 581.

[46] García, *García's New Treatise,* 12.

[47] Ibid., 53.

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retarding one note, and drawing the syllable of the note following across [...]. This style is less usual than the first. [48]

During the nineteenth century, García's method of "anticipatory grace" was thought to be more popular than the "leaping grace"[49] (Vaccai's second type). Indeed, Vaccai acknowledges the former's prominence. Early recordings including Adelina Patti, Fernando de Lucia, and Alessandro Moreschi show the singers doing both. In fact, despite García's explicit instructions, both types are accounted for in his treatises. To reconcile these discrepancies, both Kauffman and Fredez assert that performers were extremely varied in their delivery. Kauffman remarks, "Listening to the recordings of our sample arias, it is immediately apparent that singers not only performed portamenti with and without anticipations, they also sang any number of subtle gradations between the two extremes."[50]

Portamento both ascends and descends; however, when to use which is just as ambiguous. Specific guidelines found in written sources include the following. "Portamenti served to shape the melody by calling attention to selected pitches, with ascending portamenti placed before important notes and descending portamenti sometimes placed after important notes."[51] Regarding the directions' relationship to speed, duration, and dynamics, Brown quotes several nineteenth-century sources. For example, Johannes Frederik Fröhlich recommends, "A portamento on a descending interval must be taken somewhat faster, as is marked by the little note at the fall of the octave, so that no howling instead of singing results and the unbearable

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[48] Sarah Potter, "Changing Vocal Style and Technique in Britain during the Long Nineteenth Century," 112.

[49] Leaping grace refers to a portamento on the syllable of the arrival note.

[50] Kauffman, "Portamento in Romantic Opera," 145.

[51] Finson, "Performing Practice in the Late Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to the Music of Brahms," 465.

drawling will be avoided. The more distant the interval, therefore, the faster it must be performed

in descending."[52] J. F. Schubert insisted that the same quickening take place for ascending

portamento. He also advised, "The main note should be strongly attacked and the afternote

slurred very gently and weakly to the preceding note, particularly downwards. Only in vocal

pieces of a firey, vehement character would I now and then, upward, but never downwards, allow

the afternote to have more accent than the main one."[53] Corri, referring to the anticipation grace

writes, "The rhythmic representation must be regarded as approximate; it is clear that in most

circumstances the grace-note would have been considerably shorter than a semiquaver."[54] Lastly,

Brown cites Luigi Parisotti's 1911 treatise: "The portamento is used to emphasise the sentimental

expression of the words. It should be sung in the form of diminuendo and by softening the voice

to render tender and gentle feelings, and in the form of crescendo to render stronger feelings.[55]

According to Martha Elliott, García's advice is, "The character of the words and music should

determine the quality of the portamento: Full and rapid for vigorous sentiments, slower and more

gentle for a tender and gracious movements."[56] Hugo Becker and Dago Rynar's 1924 string

method distinguishes between (for strings) the lyric and the heroic portamento. They also created

four general rules: "1.) Every portamento should be treated with a diminuendo, the larger the

leap contributes to a more intense diminuendo, 2.) The larger the leap, the slower the slide should

[52] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice,* 567.

[53] Ibid., 567

[54] Idid., 567

[55] Ibid., 537.

[56] Elliott, *Singing in Style,* 139.

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DIRECTION	DYNAMIC	SPEED/RATE	SENTIMENT	PERFORMER/TEACHER
	Full	Rapid	Vigorous	García
	Gentle	Slow	Tenderness	García
	Messa di voce	Increases (Faster) in proportion to the interval		Fröhlich
Either	Main note accented			J.F Schubert
Ascending	Quitted note accented OK		Fiery	J.F Schubert
	Diminuendo		Tenderness	Parisotti
	Crescendo		Strong Feelings	Parisotti
		Rapid or drawn out		Corri
	Diminuendo		(Grief, add vibrato)	Becker & Rynar

Table 1.1. *Comparative Treatise Data on Portamento Intensities.*

be, 3.) Do not follow a portamento in one direction with one immediately in the opposite

direction, and 4.) At pinnacle moments of drama (for example, grief, passion) a descending

portamento should also contain vibrato."[57] (Table 1.1) illustrates how the performers

contradicted one another or left certain aspects unanswered; blanks indicate a lack of guidance.

The most consistent information aligns sentiment and dynamics. Nevertheless, there are still gaps

allowing for confusion or granting freedoms, depending on one's perspective.

Will Crutchfield is the author of one of Oxford's more recent portamento definitions and

is also a performance practice expert regarding ninetieth-century singing. Crutchfield is also the

founding Artistic Director of the American opera company, *Teatro Nuovo. Teatro Nuovo*

presented its inaugural season in 2018 and has proudly incorporated portamento into both

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[57] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 152.

singing and string playing. When asked his thoughts on the execution of choral portamento, Crutchfield first critiqued the vocal quality treatment of diminuendos heard in some early recordings. He thus warns against singers coming "off the breath" (softening to a breathy timbre/ lacking formant and resonance) for both technique and expressive purposes. Instead he recommends that the "portamento follow the dynamic shape of the phrase in which it is being introduced."[58] Concerning the duration of portamento in an ensemble context, Crutchfield promotes a relatively late and rapid portamento. With regards to the dynamic relationship between ascending and descending portamento, Crutchfield writes,

> Some vocal treatises from the nineteenth century make this explicit and say that rising portamento should have a crescendo and descending portamento should have diminuendo. García, with his typical thoroughness, points out that both rising and falling slides can be done either with crescendo or diminuendo or with no change at all, and I would say that state of variety corresponds best to what we actually hear in the execution of the period when portamento was still in spontaneous use—from soloists, choirs, and orchestras alike. Yes, empirically speaking the descending-and-diminishing portamento is probably the most frequent kind, but it is not a lopsided preference—there is plenty of descending with crescendo, plenty of ascending with either cresc. or dim., and (especially) plenty of portamento maintaining steady volume.[59]

There is no indication that Crutchfield has incorporated portamento into a choral performance. However, the endorsement of orchestral portamento is quite revealing and applicable. His advice reveals his modern-day values, informed by recordings and treatises, combined into a specific aesthetic.

Related to taste is the final question about how frequently to incorporate portamento. What one can gather from the writings of many, is not to overuse the device. Potter and Sorrell quote Noris Croker's advice from 1895, "'It is an ornament that must be only occasionally employed, as its frequent use (a great and common fault, especially with sopranos) is very

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[58] Will Crutchfield, (Performance Practice Author and Conductor), email message to Desiree Balfour, August 1, 2019.

[59] Crutchfield, email message to Balfour, August 1, 2019.

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worrying to the listener; it gives an impression of dragging, and an air of sick sentimentality to

the singing.'"[60] If portamento is going to transmit a special and meaningful quality, it must not be

overused. The general guidance regarding the frequency of portamento implied by written

sources is—yet again—left up to a matter of taste. Fredez asserts, "All the teachers observe that

the nuances of the portamento—how and when to use it—are difficult to communicate in general

rules, and so the recordings offer the principal way to study the effect."[61] This project will work

to address the ambiguities around portamento by both acknowledging "good taste" through the

lens of aesthetics, and then by investigating early recordings. In order to bridge portamento's

wide aesthetic gap between that of today, with that of the late nineteenth century, it is essential to

explore recent attitudes and how they evolved.

Portamento's Fall from Fashion

As previously noted, the *Bel Canto* singing schools, solo vocal treatises, and choral

methods written prior to 1950 all advocated for the use of portamento as an expressive resource.

More recently, choral-conducting method books only briefly comment on portamento, often

including direct instructions about how to avoid it.

Consider two examples that illustrate a rejection of portamento in choral singing: As

recently as 2014, choir teacher Mary Breden reported how the highly esteemed choral conductor

Paul Salamunovich used portamento as a technique to teach her choral singers what *not* to do.

Salmunovich's goal was to address pitch accuracy and intonation. However, in doing so, he gave

portamento a bad rap when he said, "'Now the singers know if there is not one of those marks

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[60] Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,* 146.

[61] Fredez, "Towards a Verdian Ideal of Singing: Emancipation from Modern Orthodoxy," 244.

[referring to a grace note or portamento marking], they must come dead center. They realize that

if the composer of this music wanted a slide, he could have written one of those two marks. Even

the youngest singer can achieve this precision. I tell them, now you are a musician.'"[62] One can

infer from reading about Salamunovich's lesson, that if an unnotated portamento were to be

heard in a choral performance, it would be an indicator of lousy musicianship.

Judging from a 1953 *Gramophone* review, it is reasonable to assume that sixty years

earlier, portamento was also viewed with disdain:

> With regret, it must be chronicled the final record (one supposes) to come from the Fleet Street
> Choir under T. B. Lawrence. It contains Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G minor* and Rubbra's *Missa
> in honorem Sancti Dominici*. …. Unfortunately, this is not the record for which admirers of the
> choir will wish it to be remembered. The singing is insipid, the intonation is frequently untrue
> both in the taking of melodic leaps and in 'chording', there is much falling in pitch, the soloists are
> not all worthy of their parts, and the stylistic interpretation is disappointing—there is even a quite
> inappropriate portamento at certain points.[63]

While there is an "inappropriate" caveat, the use of the word "even" holds just as much power. It

may not be appropriate to apply portamento to Rubbra, but a proper defense could be made for

the Vaughan Williams. Notwithstanding, there is finality to the *Musical Times* critique that

highlights portamento and portamento-like effects as blatant indicators of poor performance.

John Potter has written one of the most recent sources of information acknowledging the

existence of choral portamento. In his article, "Beggar at the Door: The Rise and Fall of

Portamento in Singing," Potter suggests that choral portamento is simply not well documented,

no longer used, and will probably never be a common practice again. These same sentiments are

restated six years later by Potter in his book, *A History of Singing,* co-written with Neil Sorrel.

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[62] Mary Breden and Robert Summer, "Paul Salamunovich: A Beacon of the Choral Art," *The Choral Journal* 55 (2014): 47.

[63] Ajax, "Gramophone Notes: Some Recent LP's," *The Musical Times* 94, no. 1325 (1953): 317.

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The only mention of choral performance is brief, refers only to choral practice in Britain, and

does not account for much of the nineteenth century. They write,

> Almost all of the singers working in Britain in the nascent early music scene in the 1960s and
> 1970s were formed by the English choral tradition: they had learned the trade in university or
> cathedral choirs, a way of working that goes back to the reform of cathedral music at the end of
> the nineteenth century. This involves a uniquely disciplined approach to singing derived in part
> from the practical realities of running choirs containing a lot of children. Every singer from such
> a background is taught to attack notes cleanly and accurately and to sing with minimal vibrato
> and maximum consideration for the overall blend that this facilitates…. The style was the very
> antithesis of the soloistic singing to be heard in opera: portamento was absolutely forbidden and
> vibrato discouraged, something to laugh at when caricaturing old fashioned singers. This is *not*
> [emphasis added] a style rooted in any consideration of historical performance practice but is a
> living tradition based on a certain sort of musical discipline; for most choristers it is the only
> 'proper' way to sing.[64]

Potter and Sorrell's summary above on choral portamento is surprisingly (as found in this

project's research), one of the only complete accounts on the topic written in the past century. To

illustrate, in their book *The Choral Experience,* Ray Robinson and Allen Winold insist that the

nineteenth-century musician intensely desired to "use music as the vehicle of personal emotion

and for the expression of universal longings."[65] Despite their referencing treatises that otherwise

explain portamento, along with their inclusion of a section devoted to nineteenth-century

ornamentation, there is no mention of portamento in the entire book. Similarly, in the

book *Prescriptions for Choral Excellence,* Shirlee Emmons and Constance Chase have only one

paragraph devoted to the subject. They explain, "Whereas a slide is generally considered to be a

careless and unmusical connection, a portamento is deemed legitimate, often mandated by the

composer with a clear slur mark, equally often not marked but obligatory according to

performance practice of the composer and/or historical period."[66] Arguably, slur marks are

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[64] John Potter and Neil Sorrell, *A History of Singing* (Cambridge UP 2012), 228.

[65] Ray Robinson and Allen Winold, *The Choral Experience: Literature, Materials, and Methods* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press,1976), 439.

[66] Shirlee Emmons and Constance Chase, *Prescriptions for Choral Excellence: Tone, Text, Dynamic Leadership* (Oxford UP, 2006), 34.

ubiquitous, and if they communicate a potential indication of portamento, surely there is more to be clarified on the matter.

Before the mid-twentieth century, instruction on choral portamento was often equally inadequate. *A Treatise on Choir and Chorus Singing* by François-Joseph Fétis, written in 1854, acknowledges portamento but only touches the surface when it states, "Sounds tied by a sort of portamento, or detached, will also be means of colouring vocal music for great masses."[67] Some years later, in 1901, Frederick William Wodell's *Choir and Chorus Conducting: A Treatise on the Organization, Management of Choirs and Choral Societies* attests to the value of portamento: "If artistic choral singing be his aim, the conductor must first secure mastery by his choir of the elementary technique of choral singing. This includes musical tone-quality; ability to deliver tone with varying degrees of power and to sustain tone (organ tone); correct intonation; precision in attach and release of tone; rhythmic accuracy; the legato; the staccato; the portamento; correct pronunciation; distinct enunciation and articulation."[68] A few pages later, he adds, "Choralists are overfond of slurring or 'smearing.' This habit must be overcome. The skillful delivery of the portamento is a different matter, and an important item of good style."[69] Wodell then provides one musical example where the singers are to execute a portamento when the composer (Elgar) has a descending leap of a fifth, marked only with a slur connecting two different syllables. Astoundingly, only one author devotes a complete section to portamento. In 1927, George Dodds published *Practical Hints for Singers*. This book is a collection of articles that Dodds wrote over

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[67] François-Joseph Fétis, *A Treatise on Choir and Chorus Singing* (London: Novello, Ewer and CO, 1854), 19.

[68] Frederick William Wodell, *Choir and Chorus Conducting: A Treatise on the Organization, Management, Training, and Conducting Of* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1901), 101.

[69] Wodell, *Choir and Chorus Conducting,* 104.

the course of seventeen years. The purpose of these articles was to assist both singers and choirmasters. A choirmaster and organist, Dodds was also the President of the Free Church Choir Union and was very active in choir festivals in the early 1900s. Regarding portamento, Dodds states,

> It should be clearly understood that in this sense the *portamento* is not a necessity of voice production, but an artistic resource. It may be used as an exercise to assist the student in controlling the forwardness of the voice when singing from lower to upper notes, and vice versa; it is also helpful in giving confidence in the banishing of breaks from the voice, after looseness and forwardness of tone above and below the break have been secured. Apart from these uses, however, its employment must be for artistic reasons alone, and the singer who achieves a top note by means of a 'scoop' is guilty of an abominable abuse of a beautiful vocal effect. Its use in singing must be studiously decided upon at infrequent points requiring emotional expression, sympathy, grief, and other tender acute feelings, and on no account must its inclusion be left to the caprice of the moment, for if it becomes a habit, the results are dreadful… Experience will teach how seldom it is really required, and if it is saved for occasional use, the effectiveness is all the greater. The experienced singer, in using it, will think of it as a perfect vocal curve, beautiful in its arc and grace, leading from one note to another, and sung from the cultured emotions of the singer's heart.[70]

Thus, in the early 1900s, Dodds validates the use of portamento as both a worthy pedagogical exercise and a powerful artistic tool. While it may be unclear from his account if he is commenting on choral or solo singing, he devotes a paragraph explicitly to the choirs' abuse of portamento in one of the six paragraphs dedicated to portamento.

Although these accounts of choral portamento are few, it is reasonable to conclude that the technique was more prevalent and accepted before the 1960s. Potter's "Beggar at the Door" sequentially compares the definitions of portamento in various Grove Music Dictionaries to show the general decline of portamento and the increase of its rejection over time. To summarize, from 1898 to 1975, the technique was explained in favorable terms, suggesting its use was frequent. In 1980, the phrase "subject to abuse" is emphasized in portamento's definition.

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[70] George Dodds, *Practical Hints for Singers,* (Bedford, Great Britain: Rush & Warwick, Harpur Printing Works, 1927), 33–5.

Finally, starting in 2001, definitions of portamento advise avoiding it in classical singing. Potter suggests that portamento has a history of being poorly documented, setting the stage for a denial about portamento as an authentic, compelling artistic resource.

<center>Plausible Reasons for Portamento's Decline</center>

The Historically Informed Performance (HIP) movement was a twentieth-century phenomenon that brought renewed interest to early music and opened pathways for musicians to reevaluate performance practice from all music of prior times. As early sound recordings from the 1920s to the 1950s become widely available with advancements in technology, researchers can now hear how the musicians played. However, some of the data gained from early recordings (even elements that coincide with treatise evidence) continue to be ignored. Performers tend(ed) to pick and choose which performance practice elements were deemed worthy. In the mid-1900s, a dramatic shift in both performance practice and compositional style took place. The stylistic changes in music composition that occurred in the second half of the twentieth century offers insight into the disconnect of why performers are claiming to be historically informed while neglecting some of the evidence.

The following factors are discussed to offer insight into the performance practice dilemma surrounding portamento: 1.) A corporate war torn, post-nuclear society, 2.) The "motherese-effect," 3.) The "phonograph-effect," 4.) Globalization of performance style, 5.) The emphasis on composers' notation and the strict, literal reading of musical texts, 6.) Musical experimentation and extended techniques, 7.) Increased demands on musicians, 8.) The availability of additional rehearsal time, 9.) An increased interest in performance practice; and,

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10.) A curiosity about psychoanalysis. Likely, these factors commingled and influenced each other, creating a collective aesthetic.

Recent generations of musicians may struggle to fully grasp how the effects of warfare might impact the arts. Nick Strimple says, "During the first three decades [of the twentieth century] composers were profoundly affected by nationalism, technological advances, social instability, and the previously inconceivable ravages of World War I. The influences of religious institutions declined as the knowledge of the human psyche increased. Social justice beckoned. Nineteenth-century romantic impulses seemed delusory or immoral, and no longer had an impact."[71] Specific to effects of World War II Strimple states, "At war's conclusion many younger composers came to terms with devastation and uncertainty by developing extremely objective styles… For some, choral music had little credibility, either because the sound was too sensuous or because the learning curve tended to be too slow for choruses newly exposed to avant-garde music."[72] Potter and Sorrell state, "it was not until the 1950s that the next significant developments in vocal performance emerged."[73] The reduction of choral music during this time in combination with a new consciousness, may have reset performance practice, revealing a generally new, colder, more sterile connection to music.

Daniel Leech-Wilkinson lays out many theories as to how the Second World War changed art. A profound factor was the impact of the Holocaust. Leech-Wilkinson quotes Theodor Adorno famously saying, "'To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,'… Perhaps it was simply that naïveté was impossible after the discovery of the concentration camps. It would

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[71] Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century (*Pompton Plains, NJ:Amadeus Press, 2002), 9.

[72] Ibid., 12.

[73] Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,* 234.

be of little wonder if singers of the generation who had come to adulthood during the Nazi period found they could no longer represent nineteenth-century love poetry without a degree of irony."[74] In addition to concentration camps, those experiencing the nuclear era were the very first to collectively imagine the destruction of all things taking place in an instant. It is perhaps not surprising that what resulted was avant-garde compositions, serialism, neoclassicism, minimalism, and other precise or disciplined-based attitudes, directly opposing the former spontaneous, "overly-romanticized" approaches to performance. Stowell likewise considers the sheer proximity of notes when he writes, "Exploitation of the glissando and portamento as an 'emotional connection of two tones'…became so prevalent in the late nineteenth century that succeeding generations reacted strongly against it."[75] Perhaps portamento's overt connectivity of two notes represented an intolerable sentiment that was thrown out in favor of distant and disjointed sensibilities.

In his article, "Portamento and Musical Meaning," Leech-Wilkinson coins the term "motherese" to describe portamento's ability to invoke nostalgic, tender, innocent, infant-like emotions. He claims, "The naivety of linking musical responses to our earliest loving relationships, achieved by portamento, became unacceptable and embarrassing later on for entirely cultural reasons. Thus something hard-wired into us through natural selection and found all over the world—babies' predisposition to feel secure in response to gliding pitch vocalizations—was used extensively by musicians in a cultural context in which it was acceptable to think of music as comforting and reassuring, but was vigorously excluded once that

[74] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Portamento and Musical Meaning," *Journal of Musicological Research* 25:3-4, (2006): 250, 253-54.

[75] Stowell,. *The Norton/Grove Handbooks in Music Performance Practice: Music After 1600.* ed. Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (New York: Macmillan Press, 1989), 399.

view of music became culturally unacceptable, once music began to be seen as responding to subconscious motives and social conflict."[76]

In times of war the societal role of women is in flux. After the war, women who had joined the workforce became displaced by returning soldiers. Many sought the reentry of prior gender roles and norms, thus strongly advocating for a feminine and masculine divide. Shira Tarrant states, "The postwar period [was]… a time of constrained feminism, a paradoxical, transitional era that was challenged by the limits of Cold War ideology and functionalist social science methodology…postwar reconstruction, pronatalist welfare state policies, and domestic ideology combined to form a transnational climate that discouraged overt political activism. The feminine mystique, combined with the popularity of Freudian psychology, defined and attempted to dismiss critical feminist objections in the 1950s as a sign of *neurosis* [emphasis added]."[77] If the post-war climate mainly valued women in domestic, caregiving roles (striving to forget that women were ever more than just wives and mothers), portamento's feminine or "motherese" qualities had no place outside of the home, much less in a cultured musical performance.

Leech-Wilkinson also proposes that trends in psychology may have contributed to the shift in music style when he writes, "Psychoanalysis was a powerful influence on the interpretation of music by performers and listeners. Following on this new approach came music 'analysis' (a telling choice of word)—the search for deep structures, for meanings hidden beneath the surface."[78] As Sigmund Freud concurrently created methods of psychoanalysis, there

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[76] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Listening and Responding to the Evidence of Early Twentieth-Century Performance," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 135:S1, (2010): 48.

[77] Shira Tarrant, "When Sex Became Gender,"*Women's Studies Quarterly*, 33:3, (2005): 335.

[78] Leech-Wilkinson, "Portamento and Musical Meaning," 258.

became a heightened interest in the subconscious mind. Such scientific developments most probably influenced music, creating biases that engaged listeners in a more intellectual, less emotional way, replacing the prior aesthetic values of dramatic displays of passion and virtuosity.

In his book, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music,* Robert Hatten considers several psychoanalytical and psychological perspectives. Hatten somewhat critically refers to musicologist Richard Taruskin's claim that the post-war music of composers such as Stravinsky and Shostakovich sound indifferent to human emotion. Taruskin had characterized their music as "subhuman" or "inhuman." Hatten instead argues that these musical shifts associated with many early-modern genres were directly reflective of human emotion. Hatten writes,

> Stravinsky exhibits a dispassionate but no less human sensibility for his virtual agents in their mythic and ritual enactments. Our shock at Stravinsky's primitivism is part of a deeply human, aesthetic encounter with a world that, although it may reveal insights into horrific political states, does not thereby endorse them. Distancing from too-easy agential inference and subjective engagement appears to be a key feature of many modernist works. But a composer may want to engage the listener even more deeply by this estrangement; indeed, since ironic allegories and myths demand a greater speculative effort, they may increase the listeners' engagements. The listener is enjoined to probe a more profound (and often psychologically more acute) expression of human emotion and motivation. Stravinsky's coherent if objectivist style had successfully achieved that aim.[79]

Hatten insists that deep-felt unique human experience was indeed expressed. The heightened interest in psychoanalysis no doubt aligned with and intensified the effect. Perhaps Taruskin's label of "inhuman" indicates the emotional climate of the period in alignment with Hatten's view. The concept of a leading musicologist seeing fit to designate present-day interpretations of such modernist music as "subhuman" describes the distance between today's listeners and post-war audiences. Therefore, one could argue that presently, there is a performance practice disconnect, or at least misunderstanding when it comes to the music of that generation, and certainly also the music of earlier eras.

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[79] Robert S. Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency For Western Art Music* (Indiana UP, 2018) 274.

Mark Katz likewise coined a term to describe a phenomenon correlating to Leech-Wilkinson's "mother-ese": the "phonograph-effect." Katz argues that the advent of recorded music had a dramatic influence on performance practice. His article describes using recordings to measure the amount of portamento before and after the 1930s. His conclusion on the matter: "The decline of portamento may first have been a response to the repeatability of recording, which makes sliding more noticeable and obtrusive than when heard live. While portamento may create a sense of impulsiveness or spontaneity in concert, sudden upward swoops or slow dragging slides may sound calculated or contrived when heard repeatedly on record."[80] It is feasible that the repeatability of a recording locked all "mistakes" into a performer's overall experience, resulting in hyper-awareness. The goal of a recording may then have changed from the literal record of a live musical event, to that of a perfect rendering of a work to avoid the documentation of one's shortcomings. A shift in priorities occurred. Rhetorical, impulsive, emotive performances were replaced by ones that emphasized superior attention to detail, strict treatment of note values, measured tempo changes, and complete unification of parts.

As technologies progressed, adherence to composers' wishes became the utmost priority. Conductors and performers alike continued to be lauded or criticized for the faithfulness of their interpretations. The widespread availability of information and recordings has created a global set of performance values and tastes. Early recordings demonstrate that the concerts of the pre-recording era were extremely diverse. Presently there is a globalization and homogenization of performance practices. Robert Philip says, "Today, when recordings are available across the world, and musicians of all nationalities sit in orchestras far from where they were born, styles

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[80] Mark Katz, "Portamento and the Phonograph Effect," *Journal of Musicological Research* 25:3-4 (2006): 225.

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and approaches have become, to a large extent, globalized, and this makes the musical world a very different place. This is not to say that all musicians play the same as each other in the twenty-first century. But the differences between them are much narrower than a hundred years ago and musicians wholly together are now expected to reach agreement."[81] Today's musicians must be able to be fluent in Philip's "expected agreement" for a vast array of styles and procedures.

Post-WWII composers significantly increased the complexities of music and added a plethora of extended techniques to performers were expected to be able to play. In his 1967 book, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Patterns and Predictions in Twentieth-Century Culture,* Leonard Meyer describes a further shift in priorities. He writes,

> The ideal of individualism and the goal of intense personal expression have now been repudiated by two of the important ideologies of our time and have been derogated by some traditional artists. In their place has been substituted the concept of the work of art as an objective construct. Originality is no longer tied to the discovery of means expressive of the artist's inner experience, but to the ordering of materials; and creativity is not seen as an act of self-revelation, but as a species of problem-solving…. Form and technique have thus superseded inspiration and expression.[82]

Meyer seems to suggest that composers and performers were more interested in an analytical approach to music, as compared to the goals of prior generations that focused on delivering spontaneous, emotive performances. There was also a commensurate interest in analyzing and reframing the performance practice of earlier musics. Finally, rehearsal strictness, aided by a longer rehearsal process, plus the spread of information and ideas naturally may have all led to a more literal reading of texts and a more globalized approach to playing.

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[81] Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording,* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2004) 23.

[82] Leonard B. Meyer, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas, (*Chicago UP, 1967) 188.

A challenge for any performer is deciding what to do in the absence of notational

indications. One solution is to confine one's performance to playing what is visible on the page,

and nothing else. Another option is for performers to carefully select specific unnotated

conventions, guessing at what the composer likely assumed would be present, but filtered

through the artist's current tastes and inclinations. Whichever approach is chosen, most

performers now correctly avoid using the "authentic" label when describing their performances

of earlier musics; this was not always the case. Although the "authentic" label is now abandoned,

the intent remains the same. Musicians use data to recapture the sounds of the past, picking and

choosing what suits them.

Because they captured the playing of some of the most revered performers and

composers alive in the final decades of the period, early recordings provide the most accurate

data concerning late Romantic music. Still—when it comes to portamento—musicians will

probably continue to "choose" to leave it out, as their judgment of "good taste" guides them. It is

common to see historically informed practitioners "pick" vibrato restraint, apply over-dotting,

and add *tempo rubato* to the music. However, the modern inclination toward "perfect"

performances—often achieved with the edits and cuts made possible by recording technologies

—will likely take precedence over elements such as portamento and melodic rubato. Philip

writes, "For this reason, period performance ignores a great deal of evidence, and nineteenth-

century documents suggest two particularly embarrassing examples—portamento and rubato. It

is very likely that string-players and singers throughout the nineteenth century used portamento

in a manner uncomfortably close to that of the early twentieth century.… But the period-

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instrument performers have so far ignored old-fashioned portamento and rubato, and it will be a bold musician who dares to affront modern taste by taking them seriously."[83]

Embracing Aesthetic Preferences

The 2011 *Oxford Companion to Music* has the following definition, "Succinctly, 'aesthetics of music' could be defined as 'speculation on the nature of music excluding the purely physical attributes of sound.' The term 'aesthetics' has been variously defined as a theory of sensuous perception, a study of taste, and a theory of beauty in nature and art; in time it became widely accepted as a concept denoting the philosophical investigation of the theory of art."[84] This project addresses aesthetics with a singular goal. The application of portamento requires the conductor to have an appreciation for the resulting sound and affect. Since the use of portamento does not align with current choral practices, a modern-day aesthetic will need to be developed and cultivated. Therefore, the question of what a tasteful and beautiful rendering of portamento needs to be recognized in a present-day context.

Leonard Meyer ascribes "musical meaning" to the listeners' expectations. He argues that a musical work will go unnoticed if it follows all expected (harmonic, articulatory, dynamic, tempo) traditions and probabilities. Furthermore, if all familiar customs are absent, chaos will be perceived. Therefore, some deviation from the expected is crucial; for there to be an aesthetic awareness, contrast and surprise must be observable. Meyer acknowledges portamento's ability to deviate when he states, "Sometimes such uncertainty is slight and evanescent, as when a chromatic tone is introduced within a standard cadential progression or when the portamento of a

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[83] Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance 1900–1950* (Cambridge UP, 1992),, 238–39.

[84] Bojan Bujić, "aesthetics of music," *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Oxford UP, (2011).

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violinist delays the arrival of a substantiative (expected) tone ever so little."[85] Indeed, portamento can tantalize one's expectations by not giving a straightforward resolution. Portamento can also be found at the extreme end of the legato spectrum. Thus, paramount articulatory contrast becomes possible.

Portamento has frequently been referred to as an ornament by many authors. However, Kauffman cites García's and Garaudé's treatise to argue that portamento was more significant than an ornament, "Authors of nineteenth-century singing treatises did not regard portamento as an ornament, but rather as a vital aspect of vocal production."[86] Kaufmann makes the case that both treatises place portamento in their primary chapters concerning vocal production; ornamentation is handled separately. This project both acknowledges the prominence of portamento in developing vocal technique and also views it as an expressive, lyrical tool that can be intentionally employed as an ornament. In the context of choral ensemble today, portamento must be designated, described, modeled, and rehearsed. The only other option is to allow for portamento to be random or continuous and perpetual.

A conductor's treatment of portamento and vibrato can be seen as a direct reflection of their preference and is, therefore, a representation of an aesthetic. In her article "'Aesthetics' in Late 20th Century Scholarship," Judith Becker states,"Whatever a society's beliefs concerning the meaningful, relevant or the aesthetic in music to be, our understanding of those beliefs is filtered through our own cultural assumptions, our own language and the intermediary mind and language of the reporter of those beliefs."[87] As previously quoted, Carl Flesch's 1924 warning

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[85] Meyer, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas,* 10.

[86] Kauffman, "Portamento in Romantic Opera," 140.

[87] Judith Becker, "'Aesthetics' in Late 20th Century Scholarship," *The World of Music* 25:3 (1983): 66.

against the "aesthetically inexcusable"[88] use of portamento, invites the interpreter to exercise proper taste. The challenge becomes that of making a case for what is currently aesthetically pleasing according to modern conceptions of "good taste."

Following accepted trends and musical attitudes, present-day listeners may very well deem portamento as sounding sloppy or old-fashioned. In order to reconcile portamento's negative connotations, a hybrid model may work to prove to a listener that all the characteristics of a high-quality performance are still in place. The most commonly adopted ensemble aesthetic prioritizes concise unification within a part or a section. It becomes essential to strip away the idiosyncrasies of the individual singer and concentrate on the detail-focused exactness of the collective. When ensemble homogeny is achieved, the conductor can then add stylistic elements such as vibrato or portamento. For this reason, it seems appropriate to label portamento as an ornament-like rather than a constant in performance practice. These considerations directly speak to aesthetics in two ways. First, the statements above outline and describe a specific aesthetic approach. Secondly, Kauffman's pinpointing of nineteenth-century opera singers makes it clear that the aesthetic she refers to is that from a prior era. This paper (and Kauffman) strongly argue that portamento is not viewed the same today as it was before the 1940s.

Portamento and vibrato share similar dilemmas regarding both purpose and function. Continuous vibrato is often deemed a necessary characteristic when achieving a desired tone quality. This method runs counter to the treatise evidence of prior centuries that regarded vibrato as an ornament. By comparing portamento with vibrato, this project insists that portamento is more significant than the occasional employment typically associated with an ornament. Like

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[88] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 146.

vibrato, portamento can affect the color and shape of entire phrases. The use of portamento as an expressive resource works to address a deficiency common the digital age of performance practice. Portamento gives meaning to the space between two tones, conveying subtle sentimental graduations within a melody. The revival of portamento's expressive value, lyrical intensities, and lifelike qualities is long overdue.

As previously mentioned, post-war music experienced a tendency to reward strict renderings of musical texts both of the twentieth centuries and also of prior periods. By reinserting portamento into modern-day choral rehearsals, an opposite aesthetic emerges, leaning toward a less-literal reading of musical texts.

Portamento's blurring of both precise pitch and rhythm will challenge the current "corporate" aesthetic that prioritizes "perfect," error-free performances. If portamento sounds intentional, it can hopefully be adopted into a performance practice perceived as one that maintains values of discipline and attention to detail. In a recent interview, Will Crutchfield (without any prompting) indicated a similar preference/recommendation that comments on both prior and current aesthetic choices or awarenesses.

> I do *not* hear much evidence of portamento [in early source recordings] as a conscious choice that might have been requested explicitly by a chorus-master or conductor. Both in choruses and orchestras, it is obvious on close listening that some participants are making portamento while others on the same part are not. And within the ensemble bounds mentioned above, I like this—when the whole section does it exactly together at the same time, it tends (for my taste) to sound 'mannered' and to draw attention, whereas a general encouragement for everybody to slide where it feels natural to him or her tends to augment the general feeling of 'legato' and not to sound like an 'effect.' That goes for strings and choirs both.[89]

This current thesis project aims to combine the current values of high-level, well-rehearsed, and structured approaches to choral performance with that of non-literal renderings of a musical text.

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[89] Crutchfield, email message to Balfour, August 1, 2019.

Portamento will serve as an intentionally conceived, highly expressive device employed to enhance emotive musical gestures. The aesthetic will serve as the antithesis to the anesthetic: that which induces insensitivity to pain or feeling.

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CHAPTER II: Analysis of Portamento in Historical Choral Recordings

In his recent study of Music and the New Global Culture, Harry Liebersohn shows how the advent and impact of recording music reshaped the cultural environment of the post-World-War I world and beyond.[90] The history of recorded music now spans more than a century. The midpoint of that history, following World War II and the onset of the Cold War, marked a retrenchment in the aesthetic sphere, as reflected in an objectivist trend in music. A skepticism arose toward music as a carrier of sentiment; with this trend came a reticence to credit some modes of rhetorical expression that had long been established. The age of recording encouraged a new self-conscious caution in relation to melodic nuance. In this context, portamento caused unease. As in modernist architecture, with its antipathy to ornament, an aesthetic attitude arose in musical performance that banished portamento to the margins of practical music-making.

The thrust of the present study is to propose a corrective. As we shall see, portamento and related expressive devices are undeniably present in the recorded legacy of music from various countries during the first half of the twentieth century.

This chapter begins by addressing several key factors related to the study and analysis of early source recordings. The circumstances around recordings need to be considered to provide the proper context for the gathering of audio information. For example, prior to the globalization of playing—as discussed in chapter one—nationalistic traits were more prominent. Secondly, specific conductors applied portamento in varying degrees *independent* of regional factors. Additionally, the choral societies that flourished beginning in the nineteenth century contributed relevant characteristics to the choral tradition. A general understanding of these various facets of

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[90] Harry Liebersohn, *Music and the New Global Culture: From the Great Exhibitions to the Jazz Age*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Pres, 2019).

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performance practice gives a recording its proper frame of reference. Finally, the parameters and limitations of early recordings need to be acknowledged before making claims about the use of choral portamento found in early recordings.

Nationalistic Traits

It may not be possible to make concrete conclusions about choral portamento by region since early source recordings are limited to only a handful of ensembles. However, evidence can still be gathered from vocal solo and orchestral practices. Martha Elliott, the author of a modern guide to solo vocal performance practice specific to style, accounts for the nineteenth-century treatment of portamento throughout Europe and in America. Additionally, Robert Philip's regional analysis of orchestral portamento—obtained from early source recording analysis—contains similar conclusions specific to localized habits and traits.

Elliott's *Singing in Style* investigates vocal style ranging from the Baroque era to the end of the twentieth century. Each historical period is further categorized by regional inflections informed by treatises and early recordings. Throughout her work she makes direct associations that connect style to language. The language of a region reflects its culture's attitude, articulatory tendencies, tastes, and priorities.

As the *Bel Canto* school of singing maintained prominence throughout Europe, Italian influence held forth across the Western classical tradition. Therefore, Italian operatic style is often used to draw comparisons. Elliott writes, "Later in the nineteenth century, as part of the wave of nationalism that swept through Europe, 'Bel Canto' was used to contrast the Italian vocal approach with the German declamatory style."[91] Nineteenth-century Italian style has been

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[91] Elliott, *Singing in Style,* 126.

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described as highly expressive, ornate, virtuosic. It is worth noting that opera was the dominant

force in Italian music, overshadowing more-reserved musical expressions. The qualities of opera

that serve as entertainment, theater, and have secular appeal, likely led to the many critiques of

the form's overindulgence. In terms of setting a baseline, nineteenth-century commentaries imply

that Italian style exhibited the heaviest, most liberal use of portamento when compared to other

regions. Elliott states, "Contemporary accounts reveal terrible abuses of portamento, sometimes

describing Italian singers sounding like meowing cats. These sorts of complaints only got worse

as the nineteenth century progressed."[92]

Robert Philip infers that British players also frequently employed portamento. Philip

states, "Until about 1930, individual players [in British orchestras] generally bowed and fingered

as they thought fit. Players in Vienna, Berlin, and Barcelona in the 1920s were subjected to more

rigorous discipline."[93] Philip says the British portamento in orchestral ensembles sounded

unintentional and underrehearsed. The sound of players making their own choices resulted in a

constant use of portamento. Phillips describes two distinguishing features: "The astonishing

frequency of the portamentos… [and] the unvarying character of the portamentos. They are slow,

prominent, continuous, and unshaped by a crescendo or diminuendo, giving the impression that

the players are sliding monotonously and routinely at every change of position."[94]

Both Elliott and Philip suggest that the device may have been accidental used

haphazardly, probably contributing to the negative reception of portamento. Furthermore,

compared to the styles on the Continent, the English choral tradition was perhaps not as impacted

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[92] Ibid.,141.

[93] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 180.

[94] Ibid., 181.

by solo singing or string playing practices. Elliott focused on religious music as being the highlight of British singing, stating, "Opera had never been as popular or influential in England as church, oratorio, or concert music."[95] Elliott explains that there was a more simplistic view of singing in England. There were many critiques of England's singers as having poor musicianship and needing to be instructed in rhythm and diction. Elliott implies that England was not as far along in musical developments compared to other regions and that composers were not as interested in writing progressive, forward-thinking music. She describes Elgar and Vaughan Williams as having an "overexaggerated sentimentality."[96]

German-speaking regions embraced the *Bel Canto* tradition while wanting to incorporate the idiomatic qualities of its language. Elliott writes, "The percussive characteristics of the German language exerted a strong influence on German singers of the nineteenth century, who aimed to combine Italian vocal production with their own approach to articulation and expressivity. Many German manuals throughout the century advocated the *schönen Tone* of the Italian school, and some of the most famous German singers… were students of García or one of his disciples."[97] The declamatory nature of German, along with a more reserved approach to showmanship, helped shape this distinct approach. Elliott uses the frequent praise found for Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind as an indicator of German composers' ideal vocal production. Her voice was described by many as "sincere" or "pure." She was reported as lacking overt dramatization or empty virtuosic display, and as having flowing technique. Indeed, Lind's style was applauded by both Mendelssohn and García, who worked with Lind and admired her.

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[95] Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 272.

[96] Ibid., 274.

[97] Ibid.,166–67.

Perhaps in Germanic regions portamento was not considered as an extravagant device when compared to virtuosic displays of agility. Instead, it was a fundamental resource used to heighten musical texts or gestures. Clara Schumann and violinist Joseph Joachim (both close friends to Brahms) strove to express music simply and directly, rather than to indulge in extravagant emotional outpourings. With that in mind, Joachim is known for his use of portamento. Elliott summarizes, "German singers in the nineteenth century were trying to define their own style and to sing expressively in their own language while still achieving a beautiful, melodic sound."[98] Elliot explains that, by the end of the nineteenth century, heavy vibrato is still inappropriate. "Portamento, on the other hand, can be used liberally in many situations for both small and large gestures. It should be employed for expressive and dramatic purposes."[99] Philip confirms the similar attitudes on the orchestral side of things when he writes, "The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra plays with quite frequent portamentos in the late 1920s and early 1930s, but the sliding is never as frequent, nor as unvaried as the most extreme British examples of the period… [during the 1930s] the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra continued to use the portamento more frequently than the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra."[100]

The French art song, the *mélodie,* revealed priorities pertaining to the relationship between music and French poetry, and various qualities of the French language shaped performers' musical delivery. In his 1885 book *Harmonie et mélodie,* Camille Saint-Säen writes, "Since French does not have the strong arrhythmic inflection of Italian or the percussive consonant clusters of English or German, syllable stress is made by duration rather than force.

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[98] Ibid., 169.

[99] Ibid., 192.

[100] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 191–92.

Because French musicians and poets believed that no syllable had an accent except either the final masculine or penultimate feminine syllable of a line, they thought that musical accents could be placed at will."[101] To cultivate a blending of language and poetry, Elliott recommends reciting the poetry away from the music and to magnify and revere the French language as much as possible. Then the singer may lean on the long syllables and pass lightly over the shorter ones. She writes, "The absence of the tonic accent and French must be supplemented by the accentuation of consonants."[102] Elliott describes the language and the music as being

> Characterized by restraint grace and beauty, especially compared with the obviously emotional and heavily ornamented style of the Italians. In his 1767 *Dictionaire de musique,* Rousseau emphasized the need for simplicity in the composition and performance of the romance. He believed that songs should be written in a simple, moving style, according to the character of the words: 'an accurate, clear voice that articulates well and sings without affectation is all that is required for singing a romance.' In the nineteenth century, this desire purity and simplicity of style continued, along with a growing aversion to virtuosity.[103]

Regarding French style, portamento was used with subtle and refined expression, gently sliding to enhance a legato, to connect small and large leaps, and being mindful of the proper accentuation styles. Elliott quotes Thomas Grubb's (author of *Singing in French, a Manual of French Diction and French Vocal Repertoire*) explanation, "The difference between the types of portamento appropriate for French versus Italian singing: in French 'the syllable upon which the *portamento* takes place must give way to the following one as soon as this syllable's note is reached at the end of the *portamento*, unlike the *portamento* in Italian where the old syllable is extended indefinitely into the notes of the new syllable.'"[104] Likewise, Philip confirms: "French

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[101] Camille Saint-Säens, *Harmonie et mélodie* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1885), 203.

[102] Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 205.

[103] Ibid.,199.

[104] Ibid*.,* 212.

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orchestras adopted a generally discreet approach to portamento at an earlier date than orchestras in other European countries."[105]

In the nineteenth century, western music in Russia was initially impacted by the Italian operatic tradition but as the century progressed other influences emerged. The *Gramophone* recordings made in Russia in 1901 feature celebrity singers from the Imperial Russian Opera following the stylistic characteristics of Italian models. After the Paris Exposition of 1889, Paris became a hub for artists and the exhibition had a profound impact on composers by introducing exotic elements such as Javanese gamelans and expanding compositional styles to include "new harmonic landscape[s], highlighting the sound of the music rather than the virtuosity of the performer."[106] Russian folk music would also serve as source material for opera composers such as Mikhail Glinka. The "Mighty Five" (composers: Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Borodin) likewise embraced the inclusion of Russian history, tales, and literature in their musical compositions, resulting in a Nationalistic style. Drawing from folk music "required words and music to work together to present a realistic flow of action and drama."[107]

As nineteenth century progressed, the significance of the performer's interpretation shifted toward honoring the intentions of the composer. To minimize the performer's altering of the score, composers worked to notate their music with precision. These detailed notions gained more and more traction, and soon after the 1889 Exposition, "Sergi Diaghilev and Igor Stravinsky took Paris by storm, revolutionizing the theater and involving the entire artistic

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[105] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 194.

[106] Ibid., 196.

[107] Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 252–53.

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community."[108] Fitting to the more "pure" ideals of French performance practice, a more

"truthful" rendering of musical texts seems reasonable. Elliott states, "Two central artistic goals

were common to all: the importance of communicating the text with a more realistic acting style,

and a growing demand for accuracy and precision in performance. Because Paris was the most

vibrant center of cultural life at the time, many musicians from Russia, Spain, and the United

States performed and studied there, absorbing the French ideal of serving the score with

precision and clarity."[109] Likewise, Viennese composers such as Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg

began to compose with precise notation. Elliott states, "Schoenberg also disapproved of too

much portamento and vibrato, exaggerated *sforzandi*, and the familiar Romantic tradition of

speeding up with a crescendo and slowing down with decrescendo. He did indicate where he

wanted portamenti with the wavy line connecting two notes."[110]

The regional perspectives on the relationship between vibrato and portamento as

unnotated components of performance, indicate that it was common to prefer either

vibrato *or* portamento, but not both. Phillip states, "[Woodwind vibrato] was adopted first in

France, and by French players in America, was spreading to many British players by the 1930s,

and only in the late 1940s became accepted in Berlin and Vienna. …The comparative reluctance

of German and Viennese woodwinds-players to adopt vibrato was paralleled by the opposition to

violin vibrato of the German school, led by Joachim and his pupils."[111] Joachim, as previously

mentioned, was an advocate for portamento and for its effect to be likened to a vocalist. It is

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[108] Ibid., 195.

[109] Ibid., 284.

[110] Ibid., 244.

[111] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 137–38.

important to note that Joachim was one of the first virtuosi to be recorded. Brown writes, "Joachim recorded two of his arrangements of Brahms's Hungarian dances in 1903, and portamento plays a significant part in these… [as can be further seen from Joachim's marked fingerings] he executed a very prominent portamento, slowly and with continuous bow pressure, in the penultimate bar [a leap of a fourth]."[112] If the one-or-the-other value of vibrato and portamento appealed on a cultural level, it becomes reasonable to suggest that the Italian and German camps favored portamento to a higher degree than the more discreet approaches to those aligning more with French ideals. Nevertheless, it can be seen that in the 1920s, many conductors began to make interpretive decisions about portamento for the performance of music from various historical periods and regions; many of these choices are observable on early source recordings. Phillip states, "From about 1915 onwards recordings of orchestras began to be made, and after the introduction of the electrical recording in 1925 records of the principal orchestras of Europe and America quickly became available. They provide clear and detailed evidence that the *greatest change* [emphasis added] in orchestral string practice in the early twentieth century was in the use of portamento."[113]

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[112] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 586.

[113] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 180.

Philip's Assessment of Orchestral	Portamento
Region (1900)	**Portamento Frequency (Relative to one another)**
Britain	High,until the 1930s
France	Lowest
Berlin/Vienna	Middle-high
Italy	High
Spain	Middle
Austria-Hungary	High
America	Low

Table 2.1. *Philip's Generalized Regional Comparison of Portamento's Frequency and Intensity.*

Conductor Trends

In the first couple of decades after Gramophone recordings made their debut, several highly-regarded conductors looked favorably upon portamento and called for it from their ensembles. Conductors such as Willem Mengelberg and Leopold Stokowski used portamento for expressive purposes in a variety of ways. They made intentional interpretive decisions about how players should execute portamento for specific musical moments. Since these conductors were famous for their interpretations, it is reasonable to claim that their usage of portamento was accepted as legitimate. Philip suggests that the intentional approach was adopted by "Several American orchestras in the 1920s …[which] sounds rehearsed and deliberate rather than casual or routine."[114] Additionally, we have recordings of conductors who were able to access the composer directly. The composer-conductor connection brings the resulting interpretations one step closer to authenticity, or, at least, we can verify with documentation that the composer approved of the conductor's realization(s) of their work.

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[114] Ibid., 198.

Willem Mengelberg was the principal conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra of

Amsterdam from 1895 to 1945. In addition to being famous for his orchestra's use of

portamento, he is known for his tempo flexibility. Mengelberg often premiered new works by

composers such as Richard Strauss and Béla Bartók and was a close friend and frequent

collaborator of Gustav Mahler. Mengelberg is remembered for his demanding rehearsal

technique. Phillip states, "Unlike British orchestras of the 1920s, the Concertgebouw Orchestra

was very thoroughly rehearsed under a conductor renowned for his firm discipline. Presumably,

therefore, the orchestra's portamentos were not the result of routine sliding by uncoordinated

individual players, but were deliberately contrived."[115] Samir Golescu centered his dissertation

around the recordings of Mengelberg and comments on the importance of portamento. Golescu

writes, "Mengelberg uses portamento not only as sonorous embellishment or as a means of

establishing a microclimate of sentimentality, but also as a structure-reinforcing mode of

articulation."[116]

Mengelberg's portamento decisions often did not line up with expectations. The specific

treatment and placement of the artistic resource could be nothing but intentional. Regarding

Mengelberg's choices, Philip states, "One might expect such an effect to be reserved for the

climax of a phrase or for the largest interval, but here they occur over small intervals which do

not receive particular emphasis in most performances."[117] Mengelberg's approach to portamento

required detailed rehearsal. Philip reasons that Mengelberg rehearsed portamento with the

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[115] Ibid., 196.

[116] Samir Ghiocel Golescu, "The Recorded Heritage of Willem Mengelberg and its Aesthetic Relevance," (MDA diss., Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014) 71.

[117] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 196.

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Concertgebouw Orchestra based on the conductor's recordings of the Symphony Orchestra of

New York, which he shared with Arturo Toscanini from 1922 until 1928. The New York

Mengelberg recordings "show an approach to portamento broadly similar to that of the

orchestra's recording under their principal conductor, Toscanini."[118] Toscanini also incorporated

portamento, but in a manner sounding more discreet than Mengelberg. Toscanini also used less

portamento for Classical versus Romantic music.

In his book *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music,* Peter Walls wrote about

Mahler's affection for portamento and how different conductors later interpreted it. Walls states,

"Gustav Mahler regarded the portamento as an important and expressive feature of string

playing."[119] Walls attests to this claim by referencing what an orchestra member recollected

when discussing Mahler as a conductor.[120] The player indicated that Mahler, "insisted on certain

slides in his music. Sometimes in a slow movement in other composers he would do that too. So

you'd have to slide to get there (sings a with portamento). He would sing that for you that

way."[121]

Despite his close connection to Mahler, Mengelberg was known for making changes to

scores; Mahler Symphony No. 4 (recorded in 1939) may have been an example of this. To

illustrate, Walls created a list comparing the use of portamento in seventeen recordings for the

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[118] Ibid., 197.

[119] Peter Walls, *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music.* (Rochester, NY: Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, 2003), 93.

[120] Herman Martonne, (violinist for the Philharmonic Society of New York), Interviewed by William Malloch in the 1960s. Released as "Remembering Mahler" on Leonard Bernstein's LP recording for Columbia Records of the Mahler Sixth Symphony with the New York Philharmonic. Re-released on the "Mahler Plays Mahler" CD GLRS 101 (1993).

[121] Walls, *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music*, 93.

opening of Mahler's Fourth Symphony. The recordings range in date from 1939 to 1999. Walls

reports that only one conductor, in 1984, included portamento as notated by Mahler. "Only Lorin

Maazel with the Vienna Philharmonic observes the portamento. It is a very discreet gesture on

this recording, but it is certainly there—and it *is* expressive. The most surprising recording… is

that conducted by Willem Mengelberg [in 1939], though… he does insert the portamento when

the same gesture returns."[122] Mengelberg's ascending portamento indeed occurs later, in bars 17–

18. He also adds a descending portamento on the downward leap from the g to the b."[123] This

fact highlights Mengelberg's willingness to insert portamento where not explicitly notated (See

Figure 2.1). Arguably, Mengelberg's omission was a musical decision to account for a sudden

pianissimo. Since the descending portamento (as described above) appears in both gestures, it is

also possible that Mengelberg intended for the ascending portamento to appear in both mm. 3–4

and 17–18.[124] Perhaps in the live performance, the violinists made the glides too discreet to be

audible. Walls finds Mengelberg's "malleable tempo [which] is intensified by the use of obvious

Figure 2.1. Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 3–4. Walls, *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music*, 94.

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[122] Ibid., 94–5.

[123] "Mahler: Symphony No. 4, Mengelberg & COA (1939)," YouTube video, 57:07. "Deucalion Project," Apr 16, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaDVI_vyhP0.

[124] Potential recording pitfalls and issues of fidelity are addressed at the end of this chapter.

portamenti…quite compelling. The portamenti seem exactly right and the fluidity of the tempo comes across as a genuine response to the changing character of the music."[125]

Like Mengelberg, Leopold Stokowski's work with the Philadelphia Orchestra is famous for his use of portamento. Philip describes the orchestra's, "rich sonority of its unusually large string section," and comments that, "the character of its portamentos, were unlike those of any other orchestra…. The portamento is a carefully rehearsed expressive ornament…vary[ing] greatly in speed, prominence, and shaping."[126] Philip contrasts Stokowski with Mengelberg: "Whereas Mengelberg uses the portamento to create points of sudden emphasis, often with abrupt rallentandos and sometimes at unexpected moments, Stokowski's portamentos are generally more languorous than emphatic, and create a more continuous impression of an exaggeratedly legato line."[127]

Early recordings of works conducted by their composers also reveal the use of non-notated portamento. Stravinsky's own 1928 *Petrouchka* recording[128] "shows slow portamentos reminiscent of the British at this date. This might seem surprising in a work conducted by Stravinsky, since he frequently objected to 'expressive' interpretation of his music."[129] Philip goes on to report that Stravinsky was pleased with the recording. Elgar and Ravel conducted or supervised recordings of some of their works at various points in their careers. With both

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[125] Walls, *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music*, 99. Citation refers to a performance of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture.*

[126] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style,* 198–9.

[127] Ibid., 198.

[128] "Stravinsky conducts Petrouchka (1928)," YouTube video, 23:08. "Martin Adler," Mar 6, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z933bop9D8Q. A good example of Philip's claim can be heard in 17:24–17:50.

[129] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 195.

composers the earlier recordings featured more portamento than the later ones; in all cases, the

composer provided their stamp of approval. Joachim used liberal portamento in his 1903

recording of Brahms' *Hungarian Dances.* Given that Joachim worked so closely with Brahms

throughout their careers, the composer certainly would have stood by the violinist's performance.

These early recordings show that portamento was included within an accepted spectrum of legato

playing.

As the values of performers changed in the twentieth century, portamento came to be

characterized as a Romantic indulgence. By the mid-1940s, conductors were removing or

reducing portamenti even when it was notated. For example, in 1946, Bruno Walter conducted

Mahler's Symphony No. 4. Regarding this performance Philip writes, "Even these specified

portamentos are treated with discretion in the Walter's performance, and the slow movement as a

whole is as 'clean' as it would be in a modern performance."[130]

Early recordings show that choral conductors, too, incorporated portamento with their

choirs. A prominent example was the German choral conductor, Siegfried Ochs (1858–1929).

Ochs was the founder of the Philharmonic Choral Society of Berlin and one of the first choral

conductors to be credited in early source recordings. In *Performing Brahms,* editor Michael

Musgrave states that Ochs "pioneered new standards of choral preparation and performance from

the 1880s to the 1920s and was held in highest regarding by many leading musicians of the

time."[131] In her article, "Nineteenth-Century Choral Practice: Reassessing Tradition and

Revitalizing Interpretation," Deanna Joseph references one of Ochs tutorials written for

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[130] Ibid., 201.

[131] Michael Musgrave, and Bernard D. Sherman Ed. by, *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style,* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2003) 155.

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conductors, specific to choral-orchestral works. She writes that Ochs "gives detailed directions on how to execute it [portamento]. For example, he explains how to train a choir to make a portamento in the first movement of Brahms's *Requiem* by sliding on the 'L' in 'Die da Leid.'"[132] According to Joseph, Ochs also warned against too much portamento and termed its overuse "a bad habit, common in bad choirs."[133]

Portamento is certainly conspicuous throughout Och's 1928 recording of Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus."[134] In this recording, the choir appears to use more portamento than the strings. Thus, in addition to the treatises discussed in Chapter One, early source recordings provide evidence that portamento was an accepted aspect of orchestral and choral performance until the middle of the twentieth century. The celebrated conductors in the early decades of the 1900s had distinct ways of manipulating portamento to serve their musical ends. These decisions could have been—at least in the case of Mengelberg and Stokowski—independent of the region's tendencies or literal readings of composers' scores. On one level, these conductors used portamento as a significant element of their personal style or aesthetic. Early recordings timely captured this freedom of interpretation before the universal effect of the "Recording Age" (or Mark Katz's "phonograph-effect") had time to permeate throughout Western classical performance, resulting in a movement toward globalized values. Without prior recordings, these conductors were not able to inherit capsulized interpretations in the same manner as today's

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[132] Deanna Joseph, "Nineteenth-Century Choral Practice: Reassessing Tradition and Revitalizing Interpretation," *The Choral Journal, 5*4 (2014): 27.

[133] Joseph, "Revitalizing Interpretaion," 27.

[134] "Ave Verum Corpus" (Mozart) Siegfried Ochs conduct. Philharm. Choir Berlin rec. 1928." YouTube video, 3:48. "Jozef Sterkens," July 17, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTCsb61c-vA.

conductors. Instead, they first consulted the character of the music and sought to bring that to life.

Choral Societies

In the nineteenth century, choral societies began to emerge throughout Europe and the United States. As the century progressed, the practices of the choral tradition expanded beyond a purely sacred function, moving into concert halls, homes, choir festivals, and salons. Composers wrote music for each of these venues. Jeffery S. Sposato considers how Felix Mendelssohn approached composing for this transitional time when he writes, "Unlike the sacred music of only a few decades earlier, the bulk of which was composed for use in the church liturgy, much of Mendelssohn's sacred music was composed expressly for the new emerging temple of secularism, the concert hall."[135]

Notably, we do not have many recordings of nineteenth-century choral societies. Nor is there a wealth of documentation (other than what has already been cited in this project) about choral portamento. However, it is important to consider the overall impact of choral societies on the recordings that *are* accessible, the ones that are analyzed later in this chapter. The stylistic trends are discernible from the history of these societies.

In 2013, Donna Di Grazia edited and compiled a series of essays about nineteenth-century choral societies. The essays address cultural influences, choral-orchestral repertoires, and composer trends organized by region. In many locations, choral music festivals and competitions promoted a shared community of choruses, bringing together performers who would not otherwise interact. Surely these choirs and choral conductors were influenced by each other. In

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[135] Jeffrey S. Sposato. "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" from *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music,* Edited by Donna M. Di Grazia, (New York: Routledge, 2013) 141.

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her essay, "The Building of Community through Choral Singing," Celia Applegate writes, "From Handel to Haydn to Mendelssohn and other lesser composers, these societies converged on a repertoire that was, from the outset, the joint creation of German-English musical interactions and cross-fertilizations, at the institutional and the compositional level."[136]

After Beethoven included a chorus in his Ninth Symphony, composers were inspired to use the choir in novel ways. The chorus began to build momentum and compete with advancements in instrumental technologies. Furthermore, when Beethoven individually published his compositions, he sparked an elevation in status for composers. The business elements around writing music evolved as composers began to work for commissions rather than seek the employment of a high-status family such as Haydn's arrangements with the Esterhazys. Not only did this change create a widespread demand for new music and an incentive to notate and publish one's compositions, but the occasions for a composition increased, resulting in new genres. Franz Schubert expert Christopher Gibbs writes, "At the end of the eighteenth century, Vienna, still at the center of the Holy Roman Empire, was in the midst of a musical golden age. The roughly seventy years (1760s–1828) that span Haydn's maturity and Mozart's entire career, and that conclude with the deaths of Beethoven and Schubert, saw not only the glories of the Classical style and the birth of musical Romanticism, but also striking changes in musical culture, such as the beginning of modern concert life and the forging of a new status from musicians working as independent creative artists."[137] Composers such as Schubert wrote for the entertainment of artist circles that were formed for social and political purposes. These singing

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[136] Celia Applegate, "The Building of Community Through Choral Singing," from *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music,* Edited by Donna M. Di Grazia, (New York: Routledge, 2013) 10.

[137] Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert,* (Cambridge UP, 2000) 10.

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societies, called *Liedertafeln,* were popular throughout Austria and Germany and "were often

part songs for male voices."[138] These communities performed both in a serious vein and a social,

combining singing with drinking. Specific to choral societies in Germany and Austria, Ryan

Minor writes,

> To account for the astonishing variety of choral music in the nineteenth-century, Germany is simultaneously to account for the wide array of institutions and spaces in which Germans came into contact with each other. From the *Liedertafel* (the tavern) comes an impressive supply of group drinking songs from men's chorus (*Männerchor)*; from the huge choral festivals along the Lower Rhine, a large stock of oratorios; from advanced bourgeois choruses such as the Cäcilian-Verein, an ambitious flow of polyphony; and from choruses both in– and outside of the church, a steady stream of sacred music on both sides of the confessional aisle. Moreover, even within relatively narrow social circles this sheer number of choruses that flourished is deeply impressive.[139]

Minor's compilation of choral function in this region illustrates the plethora of ways a chorus

was being used. Composers were then able to write for all of these purposes to gain notoriety,

compensation, and the joy of sharing their work.

Spontaneous performances were also occurring in the British Isles where choir festivals

and competitions were gaining popularity. James Garratt's essay on British and Irish choral

music provides some insight: "The cultural context in which choral music flourished varied

greatly, yet much of it was conceived for the moment, destined for one-off performance at a

music festival, civic ceremony, or informal gathering."[140] Each of these occasions provided

performance contexts for composers. For example, individual venues for which a piece was to be

performed along with what type of ensemble the composer anticipated likely impacted a

composers' work. These factors provide practical information for today's choral conductor when

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[138] Dennis, Shrock, *Choral Repertoire.* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009) 384.

[139] Ryan Minor, "Choral music and choral singing in Germany and Austria: An Overview," from *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music,* Edited by Donna M. Di Grazia, (New York: Routledge, 2013) 116.

[140] James Garratt, "Britain and Ireland," from *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music,* Edited by Donna M. Di Grazia, (New York: Routledge, 2013) 335.

considering their available choices of acoustical performance spaces and ensemble sizes and make-up. To illustrate, a historically informed interpretation of choral work that was intended to be sung in a reverberant cathedral by a purely male ensemble will likely affect how a conductor approaches tone quality, vibrato, portamento, and tempo.

In Europe and America, oratorios were especially prominent and covered both sacred and secular texts. Applegate states, "the nineteenth century [w]as a time in which the boundaries between religious and the profane, the sacred and the secular, church and society were renegotiated in what sometimes seemed like contradictory ways."[141] The oratorio was especially important in Britain and Ireland. Until the turn of the century, it dominated as the main musical genre, establishing a strong choral presence. James Garratt writes, "Lacking a strong native tradition of opera or instrumental music, it was choral genres—from the mighty oratorio to the convivial glee—that were the touchstone for musical values and the composer's craft."[142] As the oratorio received much attention during both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, British twentieth-century composers began to long for change. Garratt states, "The fifteen or so years separating the crucifixion from Elgar's *The Apostles* (1903) mark the zenith of the Victorian cantata and oratorio, and of the mass choirs and festivals that sustained their production. At the same time, the tensions between the oratorio tradition and the impulses of artistic progressives were becoming increasingly marked…. Similarly, for the leading composers of the period— Elgar, Parry, and Stanford—the oratorio tradition was as much a source of frustration as of success; all three eventually renounced the genre."[143] Garrett goes onto say that composers such

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[141] Applegate, "The Building of Community Through Choral Singing," 14.

[142] Garratt, "Britain and Ireland," 335.

[143] Ibid., 347.

as Holst and Vaughan Williams "abandoned the biblical oratorio in favor of fresher literary and musical stimuli."[144] Knowing that the oratorio superseded opera in Britain, and then had its own fall from fashion, does much to highlight a change of style in Britain.

Opera continued to have a stronghold on Italian performers and composers. Francesco Izzo writes, "The stylistic identity that characterizes so much sacred music in the nineteenth-century Italy is all but absent in secular genres that developed in close connection with opera. Indeed, the countless celebratory hymns and cantatas composed for various occasions throughout the century are overtly and uncritically operatic."[145] Composers' authoring of sacred music that contained operatic tendencies align with the treatise evidence of how singers were trained. The added element of choral music adhering to opera concepts would suggest that singers who performed in a choral capacity—on and off the opera stage—reported back the nation's pride in the Italian style.

Historical knowledge of what choral societies valued and were influenced by during the nineteenth century help shape the framework for which a listener approaches an applicable recording. Furthermore, stylistic tendencies contribute to the historically informed half of the "HIP plus modern aesthetic" equation that is used in this project to make informed decisions about portamento. Additional considerations include the prominence and performance circumstances associated to particular genres. A region's propensity for a specific genre during a specific period provides context when engaging with the work of individual choral composers. Scholars who have written about nineteenth-century choral societies report that cultural norms

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[144] Ibid., 347.

[145] Francesco Izzo, "A Tale of Survival: Choral Music in Italy," from *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music,* Edited by Donna M. Di Grazia, (New York: Routledge, 2013) 318.

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deeply impacted the choral traditions, sharing commonalities with what this project reported in both solo vocal and orchestral performance practice. The opening "Nationalism" section of this chapter concluded that there exists a strong relationship between a region's music and its language(s) and customs. These conclusions were gathered via a synthesis of Martha Elliott's and Robert Philip's research. Both scholars made their claims after they aligned treatise information with what they observed by listening to early source recordings paired with appropriate musical scores. This project follows a similar model.

Early Recording Technologies and Limitations

Researchers must provide appropriate disclaimers to account for the obstacles that early recording artists and engineers faced. Several factors exist that make factual claims—especially in and about authenticity to the composer—problematic if not impossible. Such issues include limitations of recording technology; microphone exaggeration; representation of a specific performer on a single occasion; limitations on dynamics; sound quality; modern-day digital adjustments made to recordings; reproduction speeds; biased analysis; and the fidelity or truthfulness of online sources. To use the data collected from these recordings in a meaningful way, one must investigate why these challenges arise, how they affect what one hears, and how to compensate for them.

This project uses the analysis of early source recordings to accomplish the goal of filling in gaps created by the inadequacies of language to fully describe sound. Written accounts can only approximate. The next challenge is to use written language to describe recordings. Such measurements are likely filtered through one's experience, reporting one's judgments relative to their biases, goals, and impressions. García admits to the limitations of language when he

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explains how it is problematic to try and explain appropriate occasions for portamento. John Potter provides a further example pulled from Luigi Parisotti's 1911 *Treatise on Speaking and Singing According to the Principles of the Old Italian School*. Potter states, "Parisotti gives some performance instructions by aligning dynamics with portamento but then sets it all aside with the disclaimer of, 'It is, perhaps, the most difficult of all musical forms, and can only be learnt by careful imitation of a first-class singer. It should never be too long, it should never be used twice in succession, nor, indeed, within a few bars.'"[146] Parisotti's advocacy for listening to and imitating a great singer suggests that he was keenly aware that there was no way to derive a formula or rule to determine what might be considered "too long" much less a perfect rendering of the ornament. To understand how performers performed in the past, listening to recordings is the only possible way to follow Parisotti's advice. However, a recording from the 1920s did not produce identical reproductions of live performances.

It became common for orchestras to start being recorded around 1915, ten years before electrical recordings became available.[147] The first choral recording also took place in the early 1900s. For these acoustical recordings there are accounts of numerous laborious hours spent trying to place the horn in the best possible place within a venue to achieve an acceptable balance. Listening to recordings made before 1925 highlights many uncertainties. The music is buried within distortions, hisses, and crackles which result in missing or hard-to-determine-data. The conditions for these recordings were also often not ideal for performers. Several factors needed to be altered to compensate for the recording technology. "Pre-electric recordings from before 1925 are problematic because orchestras were reduced to a small number of musicians.

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[146] Potter, "Beggar at the Door," 537.

[147] Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 180.

The string section of the orchestra was drastically reduced in size, and the players performed in cramped conditions, grouped as closely as possible to the recording horn or horns… it would be unwise to draw too many conclusions from these recordings."[148] Not only does Philip remark on the practical issues of discomfort, he accounts for the psychological nerves of many performers, including performers of their own works. "Rachmaninoff expressed a widespread view of the recording studio: 'I get very nervous when I am making records, and all whom I have asked say they get nervous too. When the test records are made, I know that I can hear them played back at me, and then everything is all right. But when the stage is set for the final recording and I realize that this will remain for good, I get nervous and my hands get tense."[149] Regarding vocal recordings, Sarah Potter agrees that circumstances were not ideal. She acknowledges, "Early recording conditions may not have been conducive to a relaxed, spontaneous, impassioned performance."[150]

The ability to only record up to four minutes per each side also influenced performance decisions in order to accommodate the time restriction. Tempos were increased and sections would be omitted altogether. Recordings before 1925 were also unreliable indicators of pitch, tone quality, and balance. Fortunately, the potentially faster tempo of an acoustic recording still offers enough portamento information to an interpreter that aims to blend their findings with a modern aesthetic. The same is true for any pitch discrepancies; as long as the pitch center remains stable, the degrees of portamento stay intact.

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[148] Ibid., 181.

[149] Ibid., 231.

[150] Potter, "Changing Vocal Style and Technique in Britain during the Long Nineteenth Century," 7.

The electric recording drastically improved matters; however, many of the same

constraints persisted. To summarize Philip's historical account, "A 12-inch 78 rpm record had a

time-limit of under five minutes per side….Slight speeding up of the tempo must have been quite

common…. Until the introduction of tape-recording around 1950, musicians recorded onto a wax

disc one side at a time…. [That] meant [in longer works] that the train of thought was broken."[151]

Leech-Wilkinson proposes that the electric recordings were an enormous improvement. He

explains,

> The electrical recording brought several major advantages: first, frequency response improved dramatically, immediately doubling the range that could be captured up to 5000Hz (which had almost doubled again by the end of the 78 era), and extending it down as low as 60Hz; secondly, mechanical resonances were largely eliminated, so the sound was coloured less by the equipment; thirdly, the electrical systems allowed studio control of many parameters of the sound, including balance; and last but perhaps most important of all, it suddenly became possible to record almost any kinds of sound in any environment. Replacing the horn with the microphone meant that performers no longer needed to shout or play unnaturally loudly; they could be spread out over a much wider area, and it was no longer necessary to re-orchestrate.[152]

Microphones were a phenomenal advancement over the horn; however, performers

reported that microphones led to issues with portamento. Mark Katz states, "Violinists found that

early microphones tended to exaggerate portamento to an unacceptable degree. Thus, what has

been one of the primary expressive vehicles of violin playing became a subtle and selectively

applied ornament, in strong measure in response to a technology that could transform sound and

make performances permanent."[153] Katz is speaking to the impact of the recording on how

performers played, suggesting that the exaggeration prompted and contributed to portamento's

decline. Katz further supports his claim by citing René-Charles "Zino" Francescatti, a French

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[151] Philip, *Age of Recording,* 35–38.

[152] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* ([n.p.]: Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music, 2009)<http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap1.html> [accessed 27 March 2012]. Chapter 3.1, paragraph 22.

[153] Katz, "Portamento and the Phonograph Effect," 211.

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violin virtuoso born in 1902. Francescatti gave a personal account of being recorded and "offered

a similar observation, 'When making recordings, it is so very easy to overdo. The microphone

picks up the subtle, tiny nuances. A little inflection which would be considered a shadow of what

you would do in public [would be] just right for recording.' Portamento, then, could easily be

exaggerated to an unacceptable degree when mediated by the microphone. It is, thus, reasonable

to expect that violinists minimized or avoided portamento to a certain extent when recording."[154]

Katz's reasoning suggests the players may have played with *less* portamento while being

recorded than they did during live performances.

For this project, as long as portamento exists, the impact of the microphone in the minds

of the performers bears minimal relevance. How and when performers executed the device offers

genuine guidance. Golescu agrees that recordings are invaluable resources, more trustworthy

than written sources. He compared the stereophonic recordings (invented in the 1930s) to

monaural sound reproductions. Despite various limitations of these recordings, they are still

valuable tools for making performance practice observations. Golescu writes, "Those recordings

may be in mono sound, but they reproduce interpretative conceptions and dynamic range with

enough fidelity as to be, more than documents, highly accomplished and directly overwhelming

musical testimonies."[155]

Another issue regarding the legitimacy of an early recording is the inability of a single

performance to speak broadly to the general truth of performance practice. Katz says, "A

recording really only represents the approach of particular performers on a specific occasion. We

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[154] Ibid., 226.

[155] Golescu, "The Recorded Heritage of Willem Mengelberg and its Aesthetic Relevance," 106.

cannot assume that they would have performed in the same way at any other time or place; nor

can we even assume that they played as they intended."[156] To compensate for the singular nature

of a recording, Katz advocates for the consulting of a varied collection of samples and sources.

How a recording was produced, obtained, and later digitized, affects the reliability of each

scenario, each containing a host of variables.

This project's most dependable source may be the digitally restored radio broadcasts

archived by the Library of Congress. The recordings are only accessible to those visiting the

library's archives in Washington, D.C. There, one can hear Samuel Barber conduct the choir he

directed in 1939, at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Adding to the performance's

interpretative validity, one of the works consulted and studied was also composed by Barber.[157]

This project also relies on two archives of recordings that have been curated with care and

accuracy. The Archive of Recorded Church Music has maintained a historical database of church

performances. Their mission is as follows: "The Archive of Recorded Church Music seeks to

preserve the unique and priceless heritage of recordings from choirs of gentlemen and boys

singing in the English cathedral tradition. The very first choir recording in England was issued in

1902, and the Archive (the largest of its kind in the world) runs from that year right through to

the present day."[158] The process used:

> Commonly called an acetate transcription, this type of 78rpm gramophone record was used to
> record live on-air radio broadcasts and never for sale to the general public. As a transcription disc
> was directly cut (direct-cut acetate) from the on-air broadcast they were usually a one-off copy.

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[156] Katz, "Portamento and the Phonograph Effect," 216.

[157] "Since receiving the NBC recordings in 1978, engineers in the Library's Recording Laboratory have been engaged in re-recording the fragile lacquer discs onto more durable polyester tape." Accessed Feb. 25, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/rr/record/.

[158] Colin Brownlee,"Archive of Recorded Church Music." YouTube "About" page. Accessed March 5, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoJLDKYk8C9b0_32eNHJf0w/about.

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78rpm transcription discs were used from the late 1920s (the dawn of electric recording) and the last such record in the Archive is dated 1959, although LPs and magnetic tape were being used concurrently from the early1950s. The Archive's first transcription disc is from 1937—making this the earliest surviving radio broadcast.[159]

The second archive is the "Internet Archive." This collection supported as a 501(c)(3) non-profit has been "building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Like a paper library, we provide free access to researchers, historians, scholars, the print disabled, and the general public. Our mission is to provide universal access to all knowledge."[160] The Internet Archive's database includes digitized electric recordings that have been uploaded by record collectors.

Only one of the recordings analyzed in this paper is pre-electric. It is also only available through YouTube. As previously alluded to, the recordings made by electric means after 1925 are more reliable than those recorded with a horn. Indeed, it is difficult to hear the choir with any great detail. However, the recording is worth mentioning for a variety of reasons and adds breadth to the study. YouTube, being a platform where any user can upload whatever they would like without oversight, raises fidelity concerns. However, the recording in mention was uploaded by the user "Digital Classics" who is self-labeled as "a collection of high quality classical music featuring material (at time of upload) not found elsewhere on YouTube."[161]

Levels of fidelity consider factual data only, leaving the analysis and its reporting as the final variable. Katz had similar concerns which he negotiated by comparing his assessments with other scholars of early recording. Katz notes, "Portamento is generally easily heard on

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[159] Colin Brownlee, "Archive of Recorded Church Music," Last modified Jan. 2020. https://recordedchurchmusic.org/what-s-in-the-archive.

[160] Brewster Kahle, "About the Internet Archive," Accessed March 6, 2020, https://archive.org/about/.

[161] Digital Classics, "Description," YouTube "About" page. Accessed March 6th, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJfA71XobkBsUPSsz8BKnQA/about.

recordings, even the oldest ones. Nevertheless, one listener may hear portamento where another

will hear incidental contact with a string while shifting…. When I have been able to compare my

findings with those in Robert Philip's *Early Recordings and Musical Style* and David Milsom's

Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance there have been only slight

discrepancies."[162] Katz was fortunate in his research to have studied several recordings also

examined by fellow musicologists. Yet, scholars have had much less to say about choral

portamento. The following is an attempt at being comprehensive.

Potter's article "Beggar at the Door" raises an additional point concerning choral

portamento, one that is not addressed in his book co-authored with Sorrell. He writes, "Although

early recordings of choirs do show some portamento (Bairstow's York Minster Choir is a good

example), the essence of good cathedral singing is a rejection of individualist 'operatic'

decadence."[163] There is nothing about whether the portamento's slide is slow, fast, swelling,

diminishing, nor whether the choir uses the method of an anticipation or leaping grace. While

describing a 1925 recording of Anton Bruckner's "Ave Maria," Bailey contributes a bit more

detail. He writes,

> The Basilica Choir… provides a fascinating example of choral style. Midway through the
> piece, at the text, "Sancta Maria," the choir supplicates through emphatic, declamation-like
> articulation. Strikingly, at "ora pro nobis," which translates to "pray for us," the choir softens and
> slows down significantly without written indication in the score. This particular tempo shift is
> quite dramatic, moving the pulse to about half as slow as the previous tempo, continuing to slow
> down for the remainder of the phrase. At this moment, choral portamento, sliding between
> stepwise pitches, and swelled phrase-beginnings are especially apparent. In the final declamation
> of "ora pro nobis," the tempo picks up using the aforementioned articulations at a slightly
> quicker pace, only to slow down even more significantly at the end of the phrase, still with a
> noticeable portamento, followed by a gently conclusive "Amen."[164]

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[162] Katz, "Portamento and the Phonograph Effect," 216.

[163] Potter, "Beggar at the Door," 548.

[164] Bailey, "Studying Performance Practice Through Sound Recordings," par. 19.

Bailey goes on to note other occurrences of choral portamento in several different recordings but

he only comments on its existence and that it can occur during stepwise passages. Deanna Joseph

experimented a bit with choral portamento based on her research and only went as far as to note

that portamento happened in several recordings. Joseph writes, "Portamento initially came from

vocal music, and it is difficult to discern just how much was employed and where it was deemed

appropriate."[165] This project examines the choir's use of portamento in several different

recordings made from 1921 until 1940. The recordings took place in different regions led by

distinguished conductors and choirs. Portamento is measured by its speed, duration, direction,

volume, interval, on which syllable it takes place on, and from what note (starting or arriving)

the portamento borrows time. Its use is compared to the text, score markings, texture, motifs, and

any other significant compositional characteristic that may have prompted performers to employ

the ornament. Finally, any instance of portamento that may be considered incidental is

disregarded. There are ample recordings of portamento that clearly demonstrate intentionality.

These prime examples will make evident the many expressive ways choirs enthusiastically

employed portamento.

Choral Portamento as Represented in Early Source Recordings

Before recordings could be manipulated by multiple tracks, subject to hours of editing

and production advancements, a record was considered to be just as the word suggests: the

record of a musical event. Robert Philip states,

> Most modern musicians are, on the whole, grateful for the existence of editing. But many regret
> that the quest for perfection has gone so far. Asked to name their favorite records, many
> musicians will name recordings of the distant past, made when there was no editing and when

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[165] Joseph, "Nineteenth-Century Performance Practice: Reassessing Tradition and Revitalizing
Interpretation," 26.

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the performance of each side was reproduced warts and all. Yet those same musicians would be horrified if some of the inaccuracies heard in those famous old recordings were to appear in their own CDs. Musicians today live with something of a conflict between the need to be perfect and the desire to be real.[166]

Available choral recordings made before the 1950s show that performers did not think of portamento as inaccurate or as an imperfection. As performance practice priorities continuously evolve, the label "perfect" remains a moving target. Before the repeatability of a recording, it was more important to move the listener than to be as accurate as possible. At the end of a performance, a live audience would be more likely to have picked up on Mengelberg's "microclimate of sentimentality"[167] than to recall how many portamentos took place. A live radio broadcast is from 1939 would be immune to any hazards of doing anything other than reporting a spontaneous, real-time, impassioned performance. Barber's use of portamento as heard in the recordings of live-radio broadcasts housed at the Library of Congress, proved that choral portamento was embedded the imagination of composers before the middle of the century.

Samuel Barber, Multiple works, 1939–40, Philadelphia

The men and women of the Curtis Madrigal Chorus under the direction of Barber were recorded on May 1, 1939, and on April 23, 1940. The 1939 recordings consisted of four pieces composed by Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) and one work by Orlando di Lasso (1532–94). The 1940 recording featured Barber's own work, "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map" Op. 15, composed in January of the same year. All five recordings use portamento quite intentionally, in varying degrees and for a variety of purposes.

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[166] Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording,* 43.

[167] Re-quoted phrase: Golescu, "The Recorded Heritage of Willem Mengelberg and its Aesthetic Relevance," 71.

The Lasso piece, "O la, o che bon eccho!" (commonly referred to as "Echo Song"), contains short phrases all treated with an echo achieved by featuring a double chorus. The second chorus precisely imitates the first, allowing a listener to hear portamento echoed by a different collection of singers.[168] Characteristic of its period, there are few expressive markings. Barber conducts it at a fast tempo—an average of half note equals 100. For this work portamento was used about a dozen times. The portamento was most prominent toward the end of the work when Barber opted to slow down and create stark dynamic and tempo contrasts. The text is also relevant. The essence of the piece is playful (the narrator enjoying the curiosity of the echo) until the end of the song when it is time to depart and say farewell; here, the sentiment sweetens

Figure 2.2. Orlando di Lasso, "O la, o che bon eccho!," mm. 65–75. Public Domain, Edited by James Gibb. Handwritten markings added by the author at the time of listening.

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[168] Orlando di Lasso, "Ecco Song," LWO 8797 R2 (digital id: 2288066) Digitized. Side A5. 1939-05-01 [disc 1511 B4] (Curtis Madrigal Chorus, Samuel Barber, conducting).

slightly. Barber's sudden change in dynamic and tempo occurs on the phrase "Rest' in pace!"
followed by "Basta, basta" (salutation of "peace be with you," and "enough, enough"). The way
that Barber plays with the seven repetitions of "basta" (not including the echo) almost implies
that the narrator is not ready to end the fun and is saddened by having to do so. The most
prominent portamento happens during this legato interpretation of the text. Interestingly, while
there are discreet incidents of portamento connecting larger intervals and also (probably) to
highlight non-diatonic pitches, the most surprising presentation of portamento happens on the
final two iterations of "basta," sung on repeated pitches (See Figure 2.2). The repeated pitches,
especially at Lasso's choice of low tessitura, present no technical reasons for a portamento.
Instead, it is used as an expressive tool.

Barber's interpretations of the Monteverdi are just as expressive and reflective of the text.
"A un giro sol de belli occhi"[169] covers a wide range of emotions and affections. The air laughs,
the sea and the winds are summoned, eyes are full of tears, and the journey ends with death.
Monteverdi sets the "laughing air" with streams of oscillating, melismatic eighth notes. Barber's
singers deliver this text in a dry manner, saving portamento for the poetic line having to do with
the quieted seas. The "sea" is musically set with four measures of horizontal undulating motion

Figure 2.3. Claudio Monteverdi, "A un giro sol de´begl´occhi lucenti, " mm. 16–21. Choral Public
Domain Library (CPDL) © 2013.

[169] Claudio Monteverdi, "A un giro sol de´begl´occhi lucenti," LWO 8797 R3 (digital id: 2288063)
Digitized, Side A2. Curtis, May 1, 1939, discs #1526B. "Lasciato mi morire;" "A un giro sol;" Amor" /
Claudio Monteverdi (Curtis Madrigal Chorus, Samuel Barber, conductor).

(See Figure 2.3). Barber uses portamento to smear the notes together, resulting in a contrast with the prior section. A modern listener may describe this section as raising feelings of nausea or "sea-sickness."

Portamento is once again used for word painting in "Hor che'l cel e la terra," every time the word "piango" (I cry) is sung. Finally, in the performance of "Amor," from *The Nymph's Lament,* portamento was used by the soprano soloist freely on leaps and on texts such as "sigh," "languish," and "love."[170]

One of the claims of this project is that before the end of the Second World War, portamento was likely in the imaginations of choral composers, as an assumed element of performance practice. The recording of Barber's "A stopwatch and an ordnance map," composed in 1939, validates this assertion.

The NBC radio announcer on the Library of Congress recording stated that subject of the poem written in 1939 by Stephen Spender, was the death of soldiers during the Spanish Civil War. The poem was published in 1939 and used by Barber with special permission. It reads:

> [1] A stopwatch and an ordnance map.
> At five a man fell to the ground
> And the watch flew off his wrist,
> Like a moon struck from the earth
> Marking a blank time that stares
> On the tides of change beneath.
> [*]All under the olive trees. [line repeated]
> [2] A stopwatch and an ordnance map.
> He stayed faithfully in that place
> From his living comrade split
> By dividers of the bullet
> That opened wide the distances
> Of his final [Baritones sing "final" three times] loneliness.
> [*]All under the olive trees. [line repeated]
> [3] A stopwatch and an ordnance map.

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[170] Monteverdi, "Hor che'l ciel e la terra," LWO 8797 R3 (digital id: 2288063) Digitized, Side A3. Curtis, May 1, 1939, discs #1527B. "Hor che'l ciel e la terra," / Claudio Monteverdi (Curtis Madrigal Chorus, Samuel Barber, conductor).

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And the bones are fixed at five
Under the moon's timelessness;
But another who lives on [many repetitions found in the music]
Wears within his heart forever
The space split open by the bullet. ["split open by the bullet," repeated]
[*]All under the olive trees. [line repeated][171]

Barber set the poem for a four-part men's chorus accompanied by pitched kettledrums. The opening tempo marking (designated in the 1942 publication) is "Tempo di Marcia, quarter note equals 92." The piece has three recapitulations of an opening march-like theme to match the first line of each poetic stanza. Eventually, the marching is replaced by various contrasting legato phrases (signaled by an *espr.* marking), all of which lead to the repeated text, "All under the olive trees." The opening and closing lines of each poetic stanza are presented three times and treated with similar or identical musical material (Barber also combines the two ideas in the last four bars). The text in between Spender's bookmarked phrases is endowed with a variety of textures and characters in a motet-like fashion. The returning music and text help tie the formal structure of the work together. The opening stanzas are declamatory, diatonic, marcato, and dominated by short note values. The legato sections feature slower rhythmic speeds, chromaticism, and often slower tempos.

The following paragraphs analyze Barber's use of portamento in various sections of "A stopwatch and an ordnance map." Factors considered include markings, poetic texts, musical analysis, and details regarding the execution of portamento.

Barber's choir uses portamento frequently in the legato, *espressivo* sections. Conversely, during the march-like sections, the choir only glides up once, to the "ord" of "ordnance"; otherwise, the onsets are clean. The leap toward the "ord" syllable moves to a dominant

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[171] "A stopwatch and an ordnance map," *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music*, Revised Edition, (New York, NY: G. Schirmer, Inc., 2011), 120–32.

Figure 2.4. Samuel Barber, "A stopwatch and an ordnance map," mm. 29–32. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,*(G.Schirmer, 2011) 124. Handwritten markings added by the author at the time of listening.

functioning chord, but the rest of this recurring phrase contains only repeated pitches sung on an

open fifth (See Figure 2.4). Both the portamento and harmony work to bring out the correct

syllabic stress and the climax of the phrase. Specific to portamento, the glide moves on the [ɔ]

vowel borrowing a fraction of time from the word "an" and landing on the arrival pitch on time.

The duration of the slide is too rapid to be accurately parsed and it sounds as if the two syllables

("an" and "ord") are elided. Nevertheless, portamento is audible in the first tenor and bass

section, aided by both a crescendo and larger intervals than are the other two voice parts (See

Table 2.2 for a comparative analysis of Barber's treatment of portamento).

Portamento is frequently applied each time the phrase "All under the olive trees" is sung.

These sections are melismatic and has slurred eighth-note motifs that are handed off between the

voice parts on different beats (See Figure 2.5). The three-note motifs all move up a whole step

and then down a half step. Anguish is audible, aided tremendously by the portamenti, which

dynamically follow the melodic contour of the three pitches. As there is no change in syllable

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Figure 2.5. Barber, "A stopwatch and an ordnance map," mm. 17–21. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,* 123. Handwritten markings added at the time of listening.

(melisma), there is no syllabic indication. The durations are blurred but the glides start during the first eighth note of the motif. The starting pitch and ending pitches were accurate and arrived on time. Barber's rehearsal direction may well have been to equally divide (duration-wise) the portamento so that each of the three pitches could be clearly articulated.

The speed of the Curtis choir's portamenti is evenly distributed and directly proportional to the duration and interval assigned to the ornament. For example, in bar 18, the tenors glide to the final quarter note of the measure starting on the second half of beat three (See Figure 2.5). The rate of the portamento is slower than the following measures, as it lasts for an eighth note as opposed to a sixteenth. Likewise, in bars 44 and 45, a descending portamento is used on the text "final." Barber has already added stress to the word by repeating it (the "final" precedes the word "loneliness"); portamento adds further emphasis. The portamento pulls time from the starting pitch for the duration of an eighth note to accomplish an on time "-nal" syllable arrival. The descending interval is of a third or a fourth (varying by part). This particular portamento is worth

noting because of the diphthong. The choir sings the starting pitch as written on the [ɔ] vowel and applies portamento to the second vowel [i]. The dynamic shape is a decrescendo, adhering to both the melodic contour and appropriate syllabic stress.

The final section worthy of mention (bars 70–80) stands apart from the rest of the work for myriad reasons. This section is where the choir's use of portamento is the most frequent and prominent. Distinctive characteristics include the single *a cappella* segment of the work, a change of meter from common time to 3/2, and additional expression markings of *più tranquillo, molto espr.*, and two *molto allargandos.* The text for this passage is "but another who lives on, wears within his heart forever." Barber conducts this entire performance with a very flexible tempo; however, this *più tranquillo* section slows to half note equals 38 (approximately—he remains flexible). Therefore, this section starts sixteen clicks (quarter-note subdivisions) slower than the opening tempo marking. At first glance, the texture appears to be polyphonic with lines set in imitation. However, an interval analysis of each line presents mixed results (See Figure

Figure 2.6. Barber, "A stopwatch and an ordnance map," mm. 70–5. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,* 128–29. Handwritten markings added at the time of listening.

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2.6). Each phrase generally follows the same melodic shape with a leap up to the second syllable of the word "another," followed by a leap in the opposite direction. Harmonically, this section is chromatic, rife with tritones, and only stabilized by the use of angular leaps at irregular intervals. The leaps emphasize the texts "another," "on" (of "who lives on"), and "heart." Portamento is used for all of these occasions and diagrammed in Table 2.2.

Except for the above mentioned *a cappella* phrases, the vast majority of onsets are accurate to the starting pitch. Clean onsets imply an intentional and varied use of portamento as opposed to carelessness. Barber uses a plethora of compositional techniques to add vitality to the text. Evidence of this includes his play on texture, tempo, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, phrase length, and articulation. His choir's performance of portamento—although unnotated— offers just as much value to the performance. Portamento directly enhances word painting, highlights motifs and other areas of harmonic interest, and is used as a tool to heighten contrast.

Both Spender's poem and Barber's composition were created in the midst of war. Even though the United States was a year away from officially entering the war, the performers likely felt close to the realities of wartime; they were themselves possibly grappling with the fragility of life and meaning of death. This raw intensity and spectrum of feeling is palpable in Barber's recording.

The final portamento aspect of "A stopwatch and an ordnance map" of interest is the timpani part. In bars 34–40, Barber's score directs the drums to glissando in an ostinato-like pattern between g-flat and c-flat, and then from b-flat to f, reminiscent of the choir's later leaps in bars 70–73 (See again, Figure 2.6). The notated durations for the drum are an eighth followed
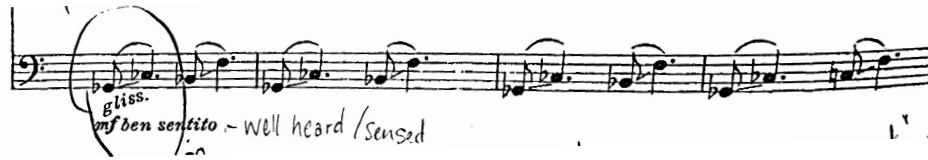
Figure 2.7. Barber, "A stopwatch and an ordnance map," mm. 34–7. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,* 124. Handwritten markings added by author at the time of listening.

by a dotted quarter (See Figure 2.7). The resulting sound (as heard on the recording) has the arrival pitch landing on beats 2 and 4. The glissandi start on the intermediate eighth note (the ands of beats 1 and 3), resulting in an eighth-note glide.

Table 2.2 documents the use of both ascending and descending portamenti on intervals big and small. The glides are rapid for the most part, though they are often extended proportionally to longer durations of sustained pitches. The majority of portamenti experience a crescendo, although the priorities seem to have been idiomatic to syllabic or word stress. The overall dynamics specific to where the portamenti occurred (versus the shape of the ornament) were often *piano;* however, the *espressivo* sections began with more dynamic restraint and would crescendo toward the climax of phrases. Therefore, it would be more accurate to suggest that overall dynamic levels do not have a significant impact on whether or not to use the device. For all but one exception, Barber used portamento in legato *"espr."* sections, and he also favored the anticipatory grace. Finally, it seems as though portamento was frequently employed on important words, in melismatic passages, and was used to highlight a recurring motive—bringing attention to important structural features.

Measure (s)	Direction	Duration	Dynamic Shape	Interval	Borrowed time	Syllable	Score Indication	Text	Texture	Other
18, 20, 51, 57, 90, 92	Descending	8th note	Crescendo	M2 & m2	Starting note	No change of syllable	*espr.*	"olive"	Homophonic	Section Crescendos
19-24, 51-58, & 91-100	Ascending and Descending	16th note	< > with melodic contour	M2 up, m2 down	Starting note	No change of syllable	*espr.*	"olive"	Imitative/ polyphonic	Overall dynamic varied
31 & 103	Ascending and Descending	64th note ?	Crescendo	m3 up, P4 down	Starting note	Arrival note	*Marcia*	"ordnance"	Homophonic	Overall dynamic: *piano*
35	Ascending	8th note	Crescendo	m2	Starting note	Arrival Note	*p*	"Faithfully in"	Unison	The recording contained different rhythms than notated.
38	Ascending	16th note	Decrescendo	m2	Arrival Note	Arrival note	none	"comrade"	Unison	Leaping grace
44–45	Descending	8th note	Decrescendo	3rds and 4ths	Starting note	Starting, with diphthong	*espr.*	"final"	Both	Dynamic follows syllabic stress & contour
68	Ascending	16th note	Crescendo	M3	Starting note	No change of syllable	*Molto allargando*	"moon"	Homophonic (w/ two texts)	Baritone part. Overall *forte* moving to a *piano*.
69	Descending	8th note	Crescendo	M2	Starting note	No change of syllable	*espr.*	"moon"	Homophonic (w/ two texts)	Baritone part
70–73	Ascending	16th note	Crescendo	d5, P4, m6, A4	Starting note	Arrival note	*espr.*	"another"	Imitative-ish/ polyphonic	*Piu tranquillo* Overall dynamic p.
74–76	Ascending	8th note	Crescendo	M2, M3, A4, m2	Starting note	Arrival	*espr.*	"lives on"	Imitative-ish/ polyphonic	*Piu tranquillo*
75	Ascending and Descending	8th up, *Quarter down	< > with melodic contour	A4 up, m2 down	Starting note	Starting note (both times)	*Crescendo & molto allarg.*	"another"	Imitative-ish/ polyphonic	Tenor 1, *Starting note is sustained for 6 quarter note pulses
77–80	Ascending and Descending	16th up, 8th down	Crescendo	m3, A2, M2, m2	Starting note	No change of syllable	*Molto espr.*	"heart"	Imitative-ish/ polyphonic	Also a *sempre espr.* Marking m. 79

Table 2.2. *Comparative Choral Portamento uses in "A stopwatch and an ordnance map," as performed by the Curtis Institute under the direction of Samuel Barber in 1940*.

Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 2, 1924, Berlin

This recording of Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony,* conducted by Oskar Fried, is the only pre-electric recording analyzed in this project. While not conducted by the composer, it is, in a sense, once removed. Oskar Fried met Mahler in 1905 and became one of the composer's early advocates. "Fried was known for championing the music of Mahler and was said to have retained Mahler's interpretive style. Fried was one of the few conductors of his time who

included all of Mahler's completed symphonies in his repertory."[172] Specific to this 1924

recording, Michael Cookson writes, "Clearly a favoured conductor of Mahler, Fried was

entrusted with making the first recording of a Mahler symphony when in 1924

he recorded the Symphony No.2 'Resurrection' with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra."[173]

David Pickett's *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler* characterizes this recording as a critical

success. One review noted that it was a "highly adventurous undertaking for an acoustic

recording [which required] careful planning and experimentation." [174]

As in many of his compositions, Mahler frequently requests glissandi and portamenti

from the instrumentalists, but there are no such markings for the choir or vocal soloists.

Nevertheless, the choir employs ample portamento in this recording.

The first entrance of the chorus (m. 472; "Rise again, yes, rise again, will you, my dust,

after a short rest!") is *a cappella* (See Figure 2.8). The tempo marking for the section is

"Langsam. Misterioso." (Slow. Mysterious.) and the dynamic is *pianississimo.*[175] The choral

portamento here is intense and frequent. Each time Mahler has written a (syllabic) slur, the choir

glides, borrowing time from the starting note at the last possible moment to land on the arrival

pitch on time. Each glide contains a swell, making the non-syllabified pitch more prominent—

thus creating a false accent. For the most part, the half-note and unslurred note have precise

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[172] Rovi Staff, "Oskar Fried Biography," *MusicWeb International,* Accessed March 7, 2020. https://www.allmusic.com/artist/oskar-fried-mn0002212624/biography.

[173] Michael Cookson, "Review, Recording of the Month," *AllMusic,* Accessed March 7, 2020. http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2010/Nov10/Fried_cap5043.htm#ixzz6G2YC0qXV.

[174] David Pickett, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*. (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005) 350.

[175] "Mahler Symphony #2 (Resurrection) - Fried, Berlin State Opera (1924)," YouTube video, 1:23:48, "Digital Classics," Jan 26, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxZssmIwHxc.

Figure 2.8. Mahler, Symphony No. 2, "Mvt. V," mm. 472–80. 186.

landings and onsets. The exception is an audible scoop going into "du" on the downbeat of bar 476. The effect is that of a *molto legatissimo* rendering of slurred notes, which today's listeners would identify as portamento.

In later sections, ample portamento is also apparent, but because there is a great deal of doubling among the strings, choir, and the soloists (who execute an extraordinary amount of portamento throughout), the nuances of the choir's performance are blurred. While many of the onsets in these sections are scooped into, portamento is not constant. For example, in the climactic final section of the work (rehearsal 47–49), Mahler places marcato markings above nearly every syllable. The choir generally does not glide through these sections unless there is a leap of a fourth or more, the ascending leaps' portamento being more audible for pitch-related acoustic reasons (See Figure 2.9).

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Figure 2.9. Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 2, "mvt. V," mm. 710–17. (Eulenburg Edition:2018) 202.

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, "Beati quorum via," 1927, England

In 1927, the New College Chapel Choir recorded "Beati quorum via,[176]" composed by

Charles Villiers Stanford in 1905. This recording also demonstrates a direct relationship between

portamento and notated slurs.

The first sixteen bars begin with a three-part phrase sung by treble voices (SSA). Their

phrase slightly overlaps with an exact echoing of the same music (down an octave) sung by the

tenors and basses. This rendering of the same music twice offers the listener an opportunity to

gather accurate interpretational information by removing doubt about incidental portamento

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[176] William Harris cond, "Beati quorum via integra est," by Charles Villiers Stanford, Choir of New College Chapel Oxford, Recorded in 1927, urn:charm:METS_B_2447, streaming audio. Accessed Nov. 9, 2019. Internet Archive. https://archive.org/details/78_beati-quorum-via-integra-est_new-college-chapel-oxford-choir-of.

86

Figure 2.10. Charles Villiers Stanford, "Beati quorum via," mm.16–22. CPDL. Edited by Björn Ehnberg © 2000.

choices. What is shared by the paired sections is the execution of portamento wherever the composer has notated a slur. In the absence of a legato slur (synonymous in this case, to a syllabic slur), singers were more precise on their arrivals and did not scoop into any onsets. In fact, the non-slurred sections sound weighted and accented, while the slurred measures seem to melt into one another. Bar 21 is the first time all six voice parts sing homophonically (See Figure 2.10). In the recording, the singers rapidly decay after each syllable, heightening the sense of separation. Likewise, the "Quo-rum"'s are attacked precisely, first in the lower three parts and then again in the treble voices. The only occurrence of portamento that is not related to a slur marking (in these seven measures) is the soprano's leap of a fourth in measure 18. This portamento occurs on a diphthong. The slide is made on an [i] vowel coming out from an [ɛ] vowel during the last sixteenth note of the measure; the [ɔ] arrives on time. The portamento is treated with a crescendo, aligning with the proper syllabic stress and emerging through the texture as the lower three parts rest. The text in Figure 2.10 is "Blessed are they whose road is straight" (poetic translation).

Figure 2.11. Stanford, "Beati quorum via," mm. 43–46.

Slurred portamenti are executed similarly. For example, in bars 16–17, the first tenor part moves at the last second (sixteenth note) and the portamento has a crescendo. The only difference is that there is no vowel migration to account for a diphthong. The choir's execution of a descending portamento is rapid, at the last moment, and treated with a crescendo. The modern-day emulation of the effect is that of an exaggerated legato. To illustrate the choir's ability to execute accurate onsets, bars 43 through 50 feature a contrasting section of block chords (See Figure 2.11). The choir's treatment of this section comes across as almost motionless; the onsets are prepared and crisp.

Felix Mendelssohn, "Hear My Prayer," 1927 England

Around the same time as the Oxford recording, Columbia released a 12-inch 78 rpm recording presenting Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer," composed in 1844. The performance was conducted by Edmund H. Fellowes in St George's Chapel featuring Grant Anderson as a treble soloist. The recording comprises moments of portamento employed by both the soloist and the choir. Portamento is not always present throughout the motet. Instead, it appears to have been

employed to highlight particular texts, textures, and to emphasize Mendelssohn's many

contrasting themes. The tempo/expression markings are limited to *Andante, Allegro Moderato,*

Sostenuto, and con un poco piu di moto. Overall, the recording reveals that many liberties were

taken, especially with tempo flexibility, and also with portamento.[177]

    The most striking use of portamento begins in bar 172, starting a polyphonic choral

section that is approached with staggered lines in imitation on the text "O, for the wings of a

dove—far away I would rove" (See Figure 2.12). The choir places a prominent portamento

wherever there is an ascending leap on the word "dove." This portamento marks critical musical

moments and vital word stresses. Portamento is also audible on the text "O," and on "wings." It

is significant that the choir does *not* use portamento on the texts "for," "of," and "a." This

comparison suggests that portamento is being used to aid understandability as layers of imitation

Figure 2.12. Felix Mendelssohn, "Hear My Prayer," mm.171–77. Novello Edition, London: Public Domain, available on International Music Score Library Project (ISMLP) 16–17.

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[177] Edmund Fellowes cond, "Hear my prayer," by Felix Mendelssohn, St. George's Chapel Choir, Recorded in 1927, streaming audio. Accessed March 21, 2020. Historical Recordings, Recorded Church Music. https://www.recordedchurchmusic.org/historic-recordings/anderson.

increase. Since there are no leaps to consider in each introductory measure, there are no technical

reasons to apply a subtle portamento.[178] The portamento that occurs on the text "dove," in bar

171, however, is by no means subtle or incidental. Neither is the treatment of "wings" sung by

the tenors (in the same measure) where there is a syllabic slur above an ascending leap of a third.

The "dove" sung by the lowest part in this bar ascends by a half step. The word arrives on time

via a leaping grace, meaning the e is retained from the prior measure, and the singer(s) slid up to

the f-natural on the arrival syllable. The duration of the glide is rapid compared to the portamento

of the alto part two measures later. Here, in measure 175, the glide is at least an eighth note in

duration (borrowing time from beat one) and crescendos as it ascends by a fourth. There is also a

slide down to the g, stealing from the a and arriving on time. The final "a dove" in the last

measure of figure 2.12 (alto part) avoids portamento. Therefore, slurs are yet again an indicator

Figure 2.13. Mendelssohn, "Hear My Prayer," mm. 99–104, 9.

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[178] One could also claim that the onsets are—by today's standards—inaccurate. The word stress is more pronounced in the bass voice part, but apparent in the other voices as well.

for choirs to employ a pronounced portamento—especially on essential texts. Furthermore,

sustained sections may have slower (longer) glides, and where there are leaps assigned to

important words or syllables, the portamento is more prominent. In most cases, anticipatory

graces are common. When a leaping grace does occur, it is usually moving to the stressed

syllable of an important word.

The soloist frequently sings leaps of large intervals and is accurate unless there is a slur.

In these slurred moments, portamento is audible but not as overt as in the polyphonic "dove"

section. Mendelssohn chose not to beam the choir's eighth notes, whereas they are beamed in the

accompaniment (See Figure 2.13). Fellowes may have interpreted this choice as an articulatory

indicator. Neither the choir nor the soloist employed portamento in these sections. Homophonic

sections were also not treated with as much portamento in general, although the final "O God

hear my cry" (See Figure 2.14) had pronounced portamento, highlighting the descending

Figure 2.14. Mendelssohn, "Hear My Prayer," mm.126–30, 11.[179]

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[179] Excerpt in the key of G major.

chromatic motion used to end the lamenting phrase. The distinctive sections indicate that the choir was not accidentally delivering portamento with sloppiness. The ornament is instead used as an expressive tool taking legato to further extremes than what is practiced today.

<div align="center">Gabriel Fauré, Requiem, 1929–30, Paris</div>

To ensure data is gathered from a variety of regions, this project investigates Choeur de la Société's recording of Fauré's *Requiem* conducted by Gustave Bret.[180] Earlier in this chapter, the French approach to portamento was labeled as discreet and the performance style of music associated with France stood in opposition to that of Italy's reputation of being virtuosic and passionate. But interestingly, in this case, Bret's performance of this work, when compared to dozens of early choral recordings, does not adhere to the stereotype of French portamento restraint. Instead, it has the most frequent and prominent applications of portamento.

In his *Requiem* Fauré aimed at offering comfort and avoided opportunities for fire and brimstone depictions of death. For example, Fauré bypassed the drama typically associated with the "Dies irae" text by omitting the movement from the entire work. Robert Summer's book *Choral Masterworks from Bach to Britten* states, "The Fauré *Requiem* ends in peacefulness as it reaches out to bless the soul of the departed and to comfort the living."[181] Summer then offers a direct quote from the composer saying, "That's how I see death: as a joyful deliverance, an aspiration towards a happiness beyond the grave, rather than a painful experience."[182]

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[180] Gustave Bret, cond., *Requiem,* by Gabriel Fauré. Choeur de la Société Bach. Recorded in March, 1930. Streaming Audio, Victrola 11154-78rpm 30 cm: Disque Gramophone W 1154-1158. Accessed March 2, 2020. Internet archive. 2faurerequiemgustavebretdgw11548/2+Faur%C3%A9+Requiem+-+Gustave+Bret+DG+W1154-8.flac.

[181] Robert J. Summer, *Choral Masterworks From Bach to Britten* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2007). 124.

[182] Summer, *Choral Masterworks From Bach to Britten,* 124.

The fact that Bret opted for the choir to sing in French Latin implies that he wanted the work to sound French. What is notable about this performance is that the orchestra does play (in alignment with Robert Philip's recommendations) with an intentional sounding, but discreet amount of portamento. In contrast, the singers, both choir and soloists, use an astounding amount of portamento. Their use of vibrato (for most of the performers, orchestral and vocal[183]) is minimal and light, making some sense of the Italian comparison. Furthermore, both anticipatory and leaping graces are abundant. Onsets in some sections regularly sound scooped. This inaccurate pitch and rhythm arrival can be heard for repeated pitches on multisyllabic texts such as "Re-qui-em" in the work's opening phrase. However, the final measures of the opus contain the same text, sung in a static block chord *without* portamento.

Another occurrence of the choir singing without portamento is the *forte* "Hosanna" section of the "Sanctus" movement (See Figure 2.15). The choir sings with accurate onsets, and

Figure 2.15. Gabriel Fauré, "Sanctus," from *Requiem* Op. 48, mm.46–49. John Rutter Edition (original chamber instrumentation, Chapel Hill, N.C.:Hinshaw Music, Inc., 46.

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[183] Both soloists were French. The Baritone soloist, Louis Morturier had a bit more vibrato than soprano soloist, Fanny Malnory-Marseillac.

portamento is even absent for the slurs in bars 47 and 49. The accompaniment is punctuated

with short, *forte*, accented gestures. The diminuendo in measure 48 marks a change in character.

By measure 50 (not shown), the brass section has longer note values and slurs. Immediately, the

choir resumes their employment of portamento.

Examples of the choir singing without portamento make it feasible to assert that they

were capable of clean onsets—one may be certain the portamenti were not accidents. Fauré's

compositional choices further support this point. The score is densely populated with slow tempo

markings, and *espressivo*, *dolce*, and *legato* indicators. In the "Libera me" movement, the choir

employs portamento just sparingly, using the anticipation grace-note for slurred leaps in pitch.

Conspicuously, the text "Tremens, tremens, factus sum ego"—meaning "Trembling, trembling, I

stand before thee"—employs generous vibrato, especially to convey the vibrating sense of

"trembling". Both vibrato and portamento are meaningfully used here. Portamento may have

been included to amplify the emotion a grief-stricken performance to honor those in mourning.

Perhaps this explains why the return of the "Requiem" text at the end of the work was performed

with more restraint—representing a state of calm and concluding the performance by offering

comfort.

A sample of the choir's abundant portamento from the *Requiem's* second movement

provides a closer inspection of how the Choeur de la Société employed the ornament. In bars 81–

84, the choir sings with portamento more than a dozen times (See Figure 2.16). There is a

sweeping feeling through this section but portamento is undeniable in several moments. Without

Figure 2.16. Fauré, "Offertoire," from *Requiem* Op. 48*, mm. 81–84, 31.

exception, it occurs in bar 83 on the text "inferni" (eternal, punishment). The portamento both

ascends and descends, and all of the intervallic relationships are stepwise. The alto and tenor duet

glides rapidly but the descent as smooth as possible without blurring the pitches as notated. Their

portamento leans into the stronger beats, especially noticeable in the tenor part. The soprano line

has the most overt display of portamento during the descent of beats 1 and 2 in measure 84. The f

is almost re-articulated on the downbeat, and then the glide immediately begins, treated with a

crescendo. The sopranos also a glide up to the "fer" syllable in measure 83. The anticipation-

grace type of portamento is used to highlight the climax of the phrase.[184] Fauré also repeats the

words, "poenis inferni," applying further gravity to the moment. The portamento aligns with the

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[184] Arguably, this is also the climax of the entire movement.

proper text stress and uses word painting to underscore the singer's ardent plea for God to liberate the dead from eternal suffering.

Johannes Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, 1933, Berlin

The Internet Archive holds a portion of the third movement of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* "Herr, lehre doch mich" as recorded in 1933, conducted by Otto Dobrindt. The text is from Psalm 39: 5, and delivers a plea to the Lord, in praise, asking for help in the understanding of death during the final days of life. The recording captures the first six minutes of the movement. This section of the movement features lines of text first sung by a baritone soloist and then echoed by the choir.[185] The recording demonstrates the choir taking the soloist's lead and imitating his portamento. Other factors include a tempo marking of *Andante moderato,* the key of d-minor, and meter set with cut-time and 3/2, giving the pulse to the half-note.

The first sixteen bars of the movement present the soloist, Albert Fischer, who applies portamento liberally. The first definitive moment is on the text "lehre" (teach) of "Lord, teach me." The portamento occurs through a diatonic descent of a third, from the 5th to the 3rd scale degree. The glide's duration is approximately an eighth note; however, the tempo is generally flexible and the second syllable sounds late. The portamento contains a decrescendo, properly emphasizing the stressed syllable. Fischer employs portamento a handful of times in this opening phrase, all with varying amounts, both ascending and descending. The choir echoes as the sopranos carry the melody while the other three parts offer support with triadic harmonies.[186] The choir's use of portamento is almost an identical echo of the soloist. One could argue that

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[185] The end of this third movement contains the only full-fledged fugue of Brahms' *Requiem*.

[186] In bar 31, the soprano part omits a 9-8 suspension found in the Baritone part. Otherwise, the two melodies are the same.

portamento choices were for technical reasons. However, Brahms wrote the choral parts to be on

the staff, idiomatic to each voice part. Therefore, it is more likely that the choir aimed to imitate

the soloist.

Another striking use of portamento captured by the Dobrindt recording is the four-

measure descent of "leben" that the sopranos sing from mm 135–38 (See Figure 2.17). Again, the

explicit portamento executed by the soprano section mirrors what the soloist did.[187] The specifics

of the choral portamento in bar 136 (not already made apparent by the notation in Figure 2.17)

are that the glides connect each descending third, outlining a ii7 chord. The time is taken from

each starting pitch and the arrival note aligns with the instrumentation. The portamento brings

attention to the syncopation of the melody. The off-beat motion is enhanced by a slight crescendo

for each glide leaned into like a *tenuto*. When the arrival pitch is reached, the voices

Figure 2.17. Johannes Brahms, "Herr, lehre doch mich," from *Ein deutsches Requiem* Op. 45, Leipzig: Ernst Eulenberg, n.d., 1997. mm.134–38, 98–99.

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[187] The baritone's melody is in the key of D-major and the choral music modulated to be in the key of F-major.

diminuendoed to achieve the overall phrase shape.

As late as the 1950s, portamento is observable in choral recordings. Anton Bruckner's "Ave Maria" recorded in Aachen, Germany, is an example. The Bruckner recording (although—due to its recency—not formally archived by this project) is another wonderful example of portamento used as an expressive tool. The Aachener Domchor (the Cathedral choir of Aachen) consistently employs portamento to caress large intervals. Significant to Aachener Domchor's performance is the careful attention placed on making multi-syllabic words such as "gra-ci-a" sound as connected as possible, embracing the emotional connection of two or more tones. Common to all examples, the anticipatory grace method was the most popular. The rate of portamento was (again) regularly proportional to the size of the leap and the duration of the starting note. The impression is one of a well-trained choir that has been rehearsed to pull time from the last relevant note value and to land on the arrival note on time. The sections are unified, well blended, and move together. The effect (from the perspective of one who has now listened to a great deal of portamento) is a sensitive, expressive, legato rendering of this text—easily understood with the *help* of portamento—sung in a technically healthy way with clean onsets, timely releases, excellent intonation, impactful dynamics, and pure vowels.

Chapter Two of this project has focused on portamento found in early source recordings. Many angles have been examined to better shape and inform the retrieval of data contained in recordings. Nineteenth-century choral trends were shaped by the language and the region they inhabited. Furthermore, the interpretations of celebrated conductors and the expansion of the choral traditions both in repertoire and singing societies impacted the overall musical culture. Despite the limitations of recording technologies, early recordings confirm that portamento was a

valuable tool for choirs until about sixty years ago. From the onset of recordings and across all national musical traditions, portamento can be detected as an expressive device, enhancing the music through word painting and by helping to bring crucial musical gestures into the foreground. Motifs, syncopations, chromaticisms, phrase climaxes, harmonic unrests, important words, slurs, proper syllabic stresses, and a choir's relationship to the soloist all provided an opportunity to employ the ornament to great effect. Additionally, a spectrum of contrast expanded through the use of portamento by extending legato past its present-day boundary. Lastly, an analysis of portamento was presented. The evidence available in these early recordings provides historical justification for incorporating portamento tastefully in choral music, within the context of a contemporary aesthetic.

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CHAPTER III: Modern Application of Portamento

While Chapter Four will provide teaching strategies and process reflection, this chapter focuses on the preparation and interpretation required by the choral conductor. Presented here is a method of strategically embedding portamento into choral music not otherwise marked with portamento indications. Compositions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will serve as exemplars, but the methodology may be applied to many other works. Pertinent background of the individual pieces, along with already accumulated data from the source recordings, will guide decisions made about where to place portamento and how it is to be executed by the choir. The source recordings align with the selected choral works; however, rather than copy the portamento heard in the recordings, the intention is to create a model for modern-day choirs, adhering to a re-envisioned modern-day aesthetic.

Performance Practice and Musical Analysis

The chosen choral pieces represent works from various regions and historical points ranging from 1869 to 1940. Before making decisions about portamento, contexts around each piece will be discussed. As portamento was used to enhance tempo, textural, dynamic, meter, key, and structural changes, relevant analytical observations will be noted. Also explored are the markings found in the notation that may prompt the use of portamento along with the technical and expressive vocal renderings of the text. This project will consider all opportunities for portamento, try them out with a choir, and honestly report back on what was successful and what was perhaps an over-saturation of the ornament. Recordings of pieces with and without portamento will be compared and verbal and written feedback will be solicited from singers. A summation of this data will be reported in Chapter Four.

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Anton Bruckner was born in Austria in 1824 near Linz and was brought up to be a devout Catholic. He began to compose at a young age while also playing the organ and singing as a chorister for the church. Eventually he directed choirs and became the principal organist at the cathedral in Linz. During this time, Bruckner studied the music of Renaissance and Baroque masters. Later in life, Bruckner attended the Vienna Conservatory to study harmony, counterpoint, and to gain exposure to the works of his contemporaries such as Wagner. Shrock writes, "Lacking confidence in his work…and desiring academic credentials he continued his musical studies in both Linz and Vienna and received a diploma from Vienna Conservatory in 1861 (at age thirty-seven). Bruckner's desire for achievement, mixed with his self-doubt, led to a nervous breakdown in 1867 and a four-month confinement in a sanatorium."[188] Shrock goes on to note that following his confinement, Bruckner would go on to have a robust career and compose some of his most celebrated works, including "Locus iste."

Bruckner's setting contains three Graduals for the church year. All are based on different Gregorian Chants located in the *Liber Usualis* (*Book of Common Use*). The first is "Locus iste,*"* which is used in Mass services for the dedication of a church. "Os Justi" from Psalm 37: 30-31 is about the wisdom of those who follow God's Law and was composed ten years after "Locus iste." This motet is diatonic to the Lydian mode and concludes with a plainchant. The final Gradual, "Christus factus est," was composed in 1873. It speaks of Christ's sacrifice, and is used as part of the Mass services during Holy Week.

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[188] Shrock, *Choral Repertoire,* 470.

Bruckner composed "Locus iste" for the votive chapel of the cathedral at Linz. Throughout history, multiple both Jewish and Christian faiths have at honored their physical places of worship. The "Locus iste" ritual speaks to the invisible presence and grace of God connected to such a space. In the Catholic faith, this Gregorian chant would be sung during the Mass for a church's dedication, and again for each anniversary of the church's founding. The sacrament is sung to commemorate the presence of the Holy Spirit within the rites as performed in the church.

Bruckner's sacred choral music style has led many to assert that he aligned himself to the Cäcilien movement.[189] However, that was not how he viewed his work. In his essay about Bruckner, Paul Hawkshaw states, "He [Bruckner] could never accept the anti-avant-garde stance of his Cäcilien contemporaries even though some of his choral works—specifically the Mass in E minor and the motet *Os justi* (1879)—are often mentioned in this connection."[190] All of Bruckner's motets and masses contain a blending of romantic harmonic style with plainchant, word painting, and many rhetorical devices commonly associated with prior centuries.

The entire text of "Locus iste" can be translated as "This place was made by God, a priceless mystery/sacrament, it is beyond reproach." The work is SATB, *a cappella,* in the key of
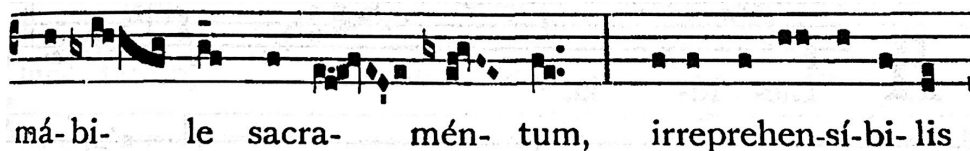
Figure 3.1. Gregorian Chant, Ed, by Benedictines of Solesmes, "Locus iste," from *Liber Usualis,* mm.1–2 or second line of chant (NY: Desclee Co, 1963) 1251.

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[189] The nineteenth-century revival of Renaissance *a cappella* choral music.

[190] Paul Hawkshaw, "Anton Brückner and the Austrian choral tradition: his Mass in F minor" from *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music,* Edited by Donna M. Di Grazia, (New York: Routledge, 2013) 184.
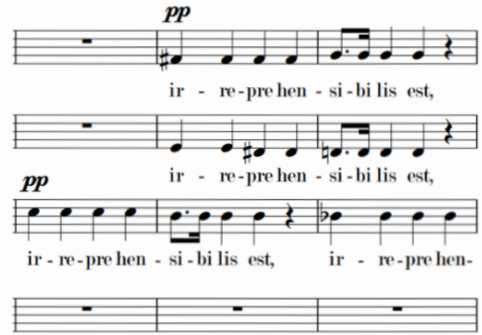
Figure 3.2. Anton Bruckner, "Locus iste," mm. 21–23. CPDL. Edited by Robert Urman © 2010.

C major, and is a motet with a recapitulation of the opening measures followed by a chromatically altered passage that elongates the final "Deo, factus est" (literal translation: "God made this"). When comparing Bruckner's composition to the Gregorian chant, the most poignant similarity between the two settings is the syllabic treatment of opening repeated notes "irreprehensibilis" (literal translation: irreproachable) (See Figure 3.1 and 3.2).

Four components are all considered opportunities for portamento further guided by the texts they inhabit. The components are pronounced dynamic contrasts, motifs, harmonic tensions, and the melodic commonality found in the dedication chant.

Other than dynamic markings and the opening tempo/expression marking *Allegro moderato*, Bruckner's notation is limited to measures, text, notes, rhythms, and a meter of common time.[191] There seems to be an attempt to mirror the marking practices of earlier music. To illustrate further, on two occasions there are breaks of silence; whereas some composers would use a caesura or fermata, Bruckner simply uses rests. These silences help punctuate the

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[191] Several editions were compared including the copyist's manuscript. IMSLP, Public Domain. Diözesanarchiv Linz, A-LId472_6_29 https://imslp.org/wiki/Locus_iste,_WAB_23_(Bruckner,_Anton).

text and to mark the phrases. Bruckner's expressive content is therefore, stated through stark dynamic contrasts.

As previously mentioned, the modern aesthetic often prioritizes exactness and accuracy. Therefore, establishing a credible first impression by waiting a bit to incorporate portamento can help establish clarity and precision. The delay can also draw attention to later executions of portamento as the piece continues to unfold. For this reason, one approach is to wait to employ both portamento and vibrato until the second line of text, in this example, translated as "a priceless mystery." Furthermore, one could argue that a stable and precise (portamento-free) approach to the opening line, "This place was made by God," is appropriately respectful to the text. Portamento can then be introduced on the text "inaestimabile" which can also be translated as "unpredictable" or "too great to measure." For this word, Bruckner introduces a non-diatonic rising motif that is repeated in sequence a whole step higher. The first iteration is to be sung *forte*, and the second is the single occurrence of a *fortissimo* marking (See Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. Bruckner, "Locus iste," mm. 16–20. CPDL. Edited by José García Illa © 2019.

Portamento can be added to highlight the motif as individually assigned to each voice part, and then again for the descending, slurred leaps that close out this line of the motet.

The music likely inspired by the chant line (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2) occupies the third line of the text. Articulation can be used to highlight the commonality and to contribute to the contrasts within the piece. For example, the repeated pitches set with quarter notes can be more detached until the rhythmic speed is elongated to welcome in half-notes. Portamento enhances the legato nature of the longer notes and arched (versus stepped/angular) melodic contour while also adding to the contrasts Bruckner has created with note values, melody, forward motion, and dynamics (See Figure 3.4).

The most profound use of chromaticism and appoggiatura occurs in bars 40 and 41. The two measures occur after an identical repetition of the first ten measures. Instead of finishing the phrase as expected, Bruckner elongates the "Deo." The insertion of portamento during these measures may work to add a romantic aesthetic to Bruckner's more Romantic approach to harmony.

Figure 3.4. Bruckner, "Locus iste," mm. 22–27. CPDL. Edited by José García Illa © 2019.

A choral conductor who wishes to both adhere to the modern aesthetics of precision and ask singers to perform an unfamiliar technique, must be specific about where and how portamento is to be executed. The synthesis of treatise and source recording data favors the use of the anticipation grace rather than leaping for two reasons.[192] First, the collective treatise evidence suggests that the leaping grace was no longer in style by the end of the nineteenth century. Second, the leaping grace much more closely mimics the type of unintentional scooping and sliding that choral conductors work hard to train *out* of their singers. Therefore, the gliding will take place during the starting pitch, and the arrival pitch is to be exactly on time. The occurrence of portamento is then placed as a marking in the score.[193] One must also include glide duration, shape (or dynamic of the glide), and treatment of diphthongs (or triphthongs) if applicable. As recommended by Will Crutchfield, the majority of portamentos will be late, relatively rapid, and will follow the overall dynamic shape of the phrase. Proper word stress will also be recognized. Specific marking suggestions will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

<div style="text-align:center">Brahms, Vier Quartette Op. 92 "O schöne Nacht"</div>

By the middle of the nineteenth century Brahms was already performing in theaters and creating instrumental and choral arrangements. Strimple writes, "Brahms composed no choral music during the earliest part of his career, and it was not until he had experienced the chorus firsthand as a conductor in Detmold and… Hamburg that he began writing for it. In the same way that Bruckner pursued opportunities revealed through the study of Wagner's ideas, Johannes

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[192] As discussed in prior chapters, the anticipation grace glides while borrowing time from the starting pitch. The leaping grace refers to portamento taking place using the syllable of the arrival note.

[193] For a proposed marking, see mm. 26–27 in Figure 3.4.

Brahms gleaned from the models of Bach, Beethoven, and other old masters."[194] Brahms'

conducting position in Detmold began at age twenty-four. His choral output includes one

Requiem, several large scale choral-orchestral works, a few pieces of with chamber

accompaniment, over fifty *a cappella* pieces, and sixty SATB works with piano accompaniment.

These sixty pieces labeled as "Quartets" were published in six different sets or opuses. Shrock

states, "The vocal chamber works include many of Brahms' most beloved and frequently

performed pieces including… "O schöne Nacht" of Op. 92…. Since the music was composed for

performers who were professional or musically skilled, the writing is advanced and all the parts

are treated with a degree of equality."[195] Strimple explains that individual selections from within

these sets have "simply been absorbed into the choral repertoire,"[196] beginning with Robert Shaw

in the 1950s. Subsequently, choral conductors have experimented with these pieces, performing

with a variety of ensembles formations and sizes.

  "O schöne Nacht" is the first of the four quartets in Op. 92. A poetic translation of the

German poem by Georg Friederich Daumer (1800-1875) is as follows:

>   [A-theme, tutti]
> Oh lovely night!
>   [B-theme, basses]
> In the heavens, magically, shines the moon in all of its splendor;
>   [tenors]
> Around it, sweet company of little stars.
>   [A-theme, tutti]
> Oh lovely night!
>   [B-theme, altos]
> The dew shimmers brightly on the green blades of grass;
>   [sopranos]
> The nightingale sings ardently in the elder-bush,
>   [C-theme]

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[194] Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century,* 53.

[195] Shrock, *Choral Repertoire,* 479.

[196] Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century,* 57.

The young man steals away softly, quietly to his love.
        [A-theme' and coda]
Oh lovely night! O lovely night! O lovely night![197]

The work is in the key of E-major and in triple meter. Brahms' expression markings include

dynamics, a tempo of *Andante con moto,* and expression markings *dolce, dolce sotto voce,*

sempre, mezza voce, and portato. The piano accompaniment independently and significantly

contributes to the entire work. To illustrate, in the first measure the piano arpeggiates through

four octaves in ascent, drawing attention upwards as though toward the night sky. Brahms also

employs nuanced word painting, a variety of textures, motifs, and an array of rhythmic devices

such as hemiola and duple versus triple. Portamento can be employed to highlight these points of

interest and draw attention to the formal structure of the work. Several factors argue for an

abundant employment of portamento. First, Brahms had great respect for the violinist Joachim,

who was well-known for his use of portamento. Furthermore, one could argue that expressive

freedom may be more appropriate to secular texts than sacred. Lastly, the research examined in

Chapter Two revealed that the time and place of composition adheres to a liberal use of

portamento when compared to other regions.

Through the use of arpeggios and repeated tones Brahms creates a stable, calm, and

peaceful mood. After the piano introduction, the text "O lovely night" is sung tutti. Then

individual, solo-like sections are evenly distributed (bass, tenor, alto, and finally soprano)

creating an A B A B[1] formal structure.[198] Once again, the absence of portamento for the opening/

first iteration of the A-theme can help establish the "modern aesthetic" precision. The

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[197] Translations are author arranged, created by comparing several translations both poetic and literal.

[198] See poem above, as labeled with formal structure and voice pairings.

independent lines that follow each A-theme are melodically related to one another and also feature moments of definitive word painting. Perhaps the most obvious is how Brahms musically "paints" the singing nightingale. The soprano voice is used, the rhythmic speed is fleeting, the melody has many leaps, and the piano features a right-hand trill. All of these aspects enhance the text, creating an image of a singing, prancing bird. This soprano line is tied to the tenor line that occurs earlier in the work on a text that depicts little stars. The two sections are related initially by the harmonic progression and also by several common intervals. For these two more pointillistic, twinkling images, portamento can be omitted. To create contrast, the bass and alto soli sections can have portamento. One approach for these soli sections, is to incorporate portamento whenever there is a slur. There are three such occasions in each phrase. The intervals are a third or wider and support the text by drawing round shapes and curves to emulate the moon and the inviting dew-stained grass. Additionally, this method aligns with the soloistic nature of these lines and contributes to the listener's recognition of the formal structure.

For the C-theme of "O schöne Nacht" Brahms modulates to the key of C-major, coinciding with a moment of narration change; there is a transfer from a description of nature to the action of a young man. In the accompaniment, the key change is coupled with a bar of

Figure 3.5. Johannes Brahms, "O schöne Nacht," from *Vier Quartette Op. 92,* m. 45. Berlin: N. Simrock, 1884, 6.

three sixteenth-note sextuplets covering three octaves in the right-hand against straight sixteenths

in the left (See Figure 3.5). The rhythmic effect for this measure is, therefore, rapid and

climactic. As the youth gently and quietly sneak away, Brahms introduces a tenor and bass duet.

Brahms sets the text "sacht," or "softly," with a hemiola, portato markings, *dolce*, and a triplet

motif in the accompaniment. This C-theme text is then repeated, incorporating the treble voices

in a canon-like fashion. To emphasize contrast on the repeats, one option is to omit portamento

for two bars which allows the hemiola, portato markings, piano motif, and the word painting of

"sacht," to be revealed without interference. To achieve this contrast, portamento can be added to

the legato sections of these phrases. To illustrate, portamento can be added once or twice to draw

attention to the canonic texture by highlighting the arpeggiated figures first introduced by the

basses and then handed to the sopranos in measures 56 and 58 (See Figure 3.6). With a

diminuendo, portamento can also enhance the notion of sneaking away on the text "schleicht" or

"sneaks" as it occurs first in the tenor and bass voices in bar 55, and then echoed by the sopranos

Figure 3.6. Brahms, "O schöne Nacht," Berlin: N. Simrock, 1884. m 56–59, 7.

and altos one measure later (bar 56, shown in Figure 3.6).

The final consideration is whether to add portamento into any of the work's A-themes ("O lovely night") which function like a refrain. Already recommended is the omission of portamento in the first occurrence of this theme. To add to the romanticism of a Brahms part-song, portamento can be increasingly employed every time this music returns. Altered pitches, chromaticism, and slurred leaps all present opportunities for portamento. This approach could add intensity, especially as the poem shifts its focus from the physical setting of the night to the quest for love. The context of the night being lovely changes as the text around it unfolds in excitement. The application of rare and subtle nuanced portamento to the second occurrence of the refrain (mm. 28–32), can add warmth by means of a more legato rendering of the text "lovely." The final return of this text repeats three times and can contain more frequent or slower glides. However, during the last iteration, the piece is winding down, marked by softer dynamics, stable harmonies, a return to the tonic, and familiarity. The omission of portamento in the final phrase will help to quiet the excitement, frame the work, and support the story-arched structure.

<center>Fauré, Requiem Op. 48, "Offertoire"</center>

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) spent much of his life as a church organist, choirmaster, and teacher throughout Paris. The *Requiem* is arguably the most well-known among his large works. At the time of its composition, Fauré's mass for the dead stood apart from previous Requiems because it focused on peace and relief for the suffering rather than any fire and brimstone depictions of death. To illustrate, Fauré omits the usual "Dies Irae" or "Day of Wrath" movement that casts unworthy souls into eternal flames. Fauré also employs mostly slower tempi, warm

<center>111</center>

timbres, and delicate melodies and textures. Summer writes, "The melodic writing of Fauré sometimes resembles that of the Romantic Period, and yet his use of new harmonies, the openness of his textures and his sensitivity to musical color places him among the Impressionists. His use of polyphony and counterpoint in his music reflect his studies as a youth at École Neidermeyer [Parisian college] in plainsong and music of the Renaissance."[199] The *Requiem* was completed between 1887 and 1890 and underwent several revisions including one publication in which Fauré was not personally involved. The 1984 John Rutter edition worked to resolve this oversight, and is now considered to reflect best what Fauré likely intended.

The "Offertoire" was one of the final two movements to be included and was first premiered in 1893. The instrumentation for this movement is mixed choir, baritone soloist, organ, and an orchestra consisting only of lower strings (violin is not used). The work maneuvers through several key areas, notably starting in d-minor, and also having an "Amen" coda in B-major. The tempo marking is *Adagio molto* and it is in common time with the baritone solo in D-major, triple meter, and with a tempo marked *Andante moderato*. Other markings include *dolce* and dynamic indications. The choral sections are generally soft throughout. To illustrate, there are only three measures marked *forte*. The text is pulled from the traditional Eucharistic service and makes pleas to release the dead from suffering. A translation:

> [Alto and tenor]
> O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
> Deliver [or free] the souls of all the departed
> from the depths of hell, and from the depthless pit.
> Free them from the lion's mouth,
> That hell (or underworld) not swallow them,
> [Alto, tenor, bass]

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[199] Summer, *Choral Masterworks*, 119.

> O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, save them
> Lest they fall into darkness.
> > [Baritone solo]
> We offer you praise, O Lord, sacrifices and prayers we to thee.
> Receive them, those souls, we remember on this day;
> Grant them, O Lord, passage from death to that life
> which of old you promised to Abraham and to his offspring.
> > [tutti choir]
> O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory
> Deliver [or free] the souls of all the departed
> from the depths of hell, and from the depthless pit.
> Amen, amen, amen.[200]

Fauré omits parts of the liturgical text, including an entire section that speaks about "Michael, the holy standard-bearer."[201] Likely to avoid the concept of overt judgment and to cast a wider net of comfort and peace, Fauré also leaves out the "ómnium fidélium" or "of all faithful" in the second line of text. By doing this, *all* souls are worthy of prayer.

Regarding portamento, the baritone solo ought not to be micromanaged. However, the choral conductor may wish to share with the soloist that the choir is employing portamento.[202] Therefore, going forward, only comments about choral portamento will be made here. For this piece, one may recall that the French singing style called for comparatively less portamento, and yet, the early source recording revealed ample portamento. The choral conductor may choose to honor the stylist treatise accounts or the evidence from the recording. Therefore, it may be of use to know that the stylistic decisions outlined here are opting for a more reserved approach to

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[200] Translations are author arranged.

[201] Ron Jeffers, *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, Volume I: Sacred Latin Texts,* (Corvallis, Oregon: Earthsongs and Cascade Printing Co., 1988), 78–79.

[202] This movement can be performed with organ accompaniment only. If strings are involved in the performance one might also consider adding portamenti to their parts as well. *Colla parte* writing is frequent; perhaps one would venture to align the choral portamento with the strings.

Figure 3.7. Gabriel Fauré, "Offertoire," mm. 11–14. CPDL. Edited by Pawel Jura © 2010.

portamento than the recording offered.[203] The reasoning is to honor the gentle nature associated

with Fauré's work. The occasions for portamento include word painting, adding comfort and

warmth by way of smoothing out slurred leaps, and to heighten the intensity at the climax of the

movement.

The opening of the movement features the alto and tenor singing contrasting sections of

polyphony and homophony. No portamento is used until the first moments of homophony so as

to assist with word painting. In bars 12 and 14, Fauré supplies a descending or falling contour

and an unanticipated interval of a minor-second on the texts "inferni" or "hell" and "lacu" or "pit"

(See Figure 3.7). Here, portamento can be applied to the slurs to great effect.

The first notable occurrence of a slurred interval larger than a third is in bar 27 and then

again in 29 (on the same music). The texts plead quietly, essentially saying, "save them from

eternal darkness." If a diminishing portamento is executed here—either in the alto section alone

or also by the tenors and basses—these brief sentiments will technically smoothe out the leap

and add a warm, vocal curve to the gestures. There are only two other choral moments featuring

a slurred interval of a fourth or larger. The first occurs in the tenor line in bar 86 while the

[203] Perhaps the frequent portamento heard in the 1933 recording did well to capture the aesthetic of the
time. The warm and nurturing qualities of portamento align with Fauré's choice of text and how he set it
to music. However, in the modern aesthetic, an overabundance of portamento would likely be distracting
to the listener or be perceived as smothering.

Figure 3.8. Gabriel Fauré, "Offertoire," mm. 81–4, from *Requiem* Op. 48*,* Edited by John Rutter, Chapel Hill, N.C.: Hinshaw Music, 1984, 31.

sopranos and altos do not move and the bass descends by a step. The second is found in the

soprano and tenor sections during the Amen coda. Summer writes, "The beautiful 'Amen,'

beginning in m. 90, is strongly connected to the compositional style and beauty of music of the

Renaissance."[204] The nod to earlier music, the "amen" text that is to be sung as quietly as possible, and the modern aesthetic argue for a portamento-free treatment of this section.

Lastly, the SAT "inferni" in measures 83 and 84 deliver the climax of the movement. (See Figure 3.8). The alto and tenor are in duet and the soprano sustains for two and a half beats on the highest pitch so far written (the bass "inferni" arrives two beats later). This is the first moment when all forces of choir and instruments arrive together at the top of a phrase. The contrasts created by this sudden joining together, loudly, only to then quickly fall away, is dramatic; the pleas are now ripe with anguish. If portamento is placed to move through the last two eighth-notes before "ni," it will enhance the drama, word painting, and will assist in executing a properly stressed syllable.[205]

Stanford, *Three Latin Motets* Op. 38 "Beati quorum via"

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) was born in Dublin and at an early age moved to London and eventually enrolled at Cambridge University, where he would later conduct and teach. Additionally, in the 1880s he taught at London's Royal College of Music and was an organist at Trinity College. He conducted choirs and orchestras and also taught composition. Along with Edward Elgar and Hubert Parry, Stanford contributed to something of an English music renaissance. After the Baroque era, the compositional output of British music went into a decline. Composers such as Haydn were commissioned from the Continent. Stanford was one of the composers in the late-nineteenth century to reinvigorate the musical landscape both with his musical output and as a teacher. Some of his pupils, including Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst,

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[204] Summer, *Choral Masterworks*, 122.

[205] To clarify, the portamento would occur first in the alto (from the b to the a) and tenor duet (from the d to the c#) during beat four. The soprano portamento would take place in the following measure, beat one, moving from the f# to the e.

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and Herbert Howells, followed in his footsteps as influential and successful composers. Stanford's musical output ranged across many genres including opera, symphonies, chamber music, and more than thirty large choral works. His works reflect a deep study of composers such as Brahms, Bach, Schumann, Handel, and Mendelssohn.

The *Three motets, Op.38* for unaccompanied choir were published in 1905 by Boosey & Hawkes. However, based on written correspondence, they likely date back to the early 1890s. The motets were dedicated to Alan Grey and the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge. Shrock writes, "Most of the anthems and motets were written for performance in collegiate chapels. As such, they are generally more complex and lengthier than the sacred pieces written for metropolitan cathedrals or parish churches…. The three Latin op. 38, Stanford's most famous choral pieces, are further examples."[206] "Beati quorum via" is in six parts (SSATBB), *a cappella*, influenced by Renaissance imitative polyphony, and formally structured on sonata principles. The text is from Psalm 119:1, and can be translated as, "Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord."

Though Stanford used a sacred, Latin text for "Beati quorum via" with aspects common to earlier periods, passionate singing styles are still appropriate and applicable to his work. Dodds states, "Sir Charles Stanford once said that, 'For his own part he derived most pleasure from singing that was marked by intelligence rather than vocal perfection.' Could any pronouncement be more striking? A musician of the greatest culture and experience finding more to enjoy in artistic singing with technical imperfection than in technical perfection without the

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[206] Shrock, *Choral Repertoire,* 538.

personality of the singer."[207] Dodds used this quote to enhance his strong advocacy for

performing from the heart rather than with a "cold scientific"[208] rendering.

Similar to Bruckner in his "Locus iste," Stanford is conservative with markings. The

expression/tempo marking for "Beati quorum via" is *con moto tranquillo ma non troppo lento*,

or, "with tranquil motion but not too slow." Otherwise, only dynamic markings are provided. The

piece is in triple meter and in A-flat major. Often, the treble and tenor/bass voices play off one

another, but numerous textures are used creating a textural "theme." Portamento can be

effectively used to convey various aspects of polyphony. Where motifs are placed and then

restated throughout various lines of imitation, portamento will draw the listeners' attention to

each motif as it occurs in succession. Further occasions for portamento can be to feature

momentary duets, intensify climaxes, give credence to important words, or to give prominence to

surprising harmonic shifts.

Chapter Two analyzed a 1927 recording of this piece and relayed that portamento began

to be audible as early as the second measure. The aim of this project is not to copy or mimic an

early recording, rather, it considers what was effective and what may be tasteful to the modern

ear. One of the observations discussed in Chapter Two is the impression of detachment that could

be heard when the full choir first achieves homophony. In bar 21 the full choir sings three quarter

notes on the text "integra" (See Figure 2.10). Therefore, portamento can be introduced to bring

attention to this novel homophonic moment by waiting to apply portamento to measures 19 and

20 and then intentionally singing measure 21 with a slightly dry detachment. Furthermore, the

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[207] Dodds, *Practical Hints for Singers*, 115.

[208] Ibid., 116.

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Figure 3.9. Charles Villiers Stanford, "Beati quorum via," mm.78–85. IMSLP. Boosey & Hawkes © 1905.

avoidance of portamento in the initial eighteen measures allows the work to unfold and build in

its expressive sentiment.

Prime examples containing opportunities to highlight Stanford's motifs set in lines of

imitation are in bars 51–63 and 76–86. In measure 51 the soprano line is an exact return of the

opening. This melody is then handed off to the tenors, then to the altos, and then again to the

sopranos. Adding a portamento in a consistent manner to each of these four lines in imitation

will help highlight the melody's points of interest as it is imitated. In measures 76–86 Stanford

staggers the entrances from lowest to highest (See Figure 3.9). Portamento can finesse and

smooth out the melody where there are slurs on the syllables "am" and/or "lant." A glide that

diminuendos offers a musical, lilting gesture as well as spotlighting each individual entrance.

There are also opportunities to use portamento to bring focus to important word or

Figure 3.10. Stanford, "Beati quorum via," mm. 47–51. IMSLP. Boosey & Hawkes © 1905.

harmonic shifts. For the most part, throughout "Beati," Stanford relies on quarter note

movement. The two main exceptions to this are his settings of the words "integra" (undefiled or

blameless) and "Domimi" (Lord). Only for these two words does Stanford employ a dotted

quarter-note rhythm.[209] The rhythmic contrast works well to highlight these significant texts,[210]

and portamento can add even more to the leaning quality of a dotted quarter followed by an

eighth note. An example of spotlighting a surprising harmonic shift would be to add portamento

to the chromatic bass movement to the f-flat in measure 51 (See Figure 3.10).

The works discussed in this chapter present multiple opportunities for portamento,

including motifs, texture, dynamics, harmony, rhythm, and word stress. Choral conductors may

wish to choose only one or two moments to incorporate portamento for special effect. To

illustrate, in "Beati" there is a dramatic build-up of energy to bar 40. For the first time, Stanford

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[209] There is one exception in bar 34. Basses sing "ambulant" while the other five parts sing "Domini."

[210] Notably, the texts "Beati" and "ambulant" are also three syllable words *not* treated with dotted rhythms.

has the choir on a *forte*. Additionally, several sections sing the text "Domini" twice. Immediately after this rhythmically homophonic measure, a fantastically contrasting section occurs where time and pitch suddenly comes to a state of suspension and tranquility (See Figure 2.10).

<p style="text-align:center">Barber, *Reincarnations* "The Coolin"</p>

Samuel Barber (1910–81) had already composed an operetta at the age of ten. When he was fourteen he formally began his training, studying composition and piano at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. His long-lasting and successful career as a composer was in part prompted by Toscanini's choice to have his NBC Orchestra play "Adagio for Strings." Barber later transcribed a choral arrangement of the "Adagio" using the traditional "Agnus Dei" text. Barber became known for his Neo-Romantic compositions and during the mid-twentieth century, he was one of the most performed composers in the United States and Europe.

After graduating from Curtis Institute, Barber was invited to create a new choral ensemble there. He directed this choir between 1939 and 1942. For this group of twenty-five singers, Barber composed "The Virgin Martyrs," "A Stopwatch and an ordinance map," and the final two pieces of *Reincarnations*. The recordings described in Chapter Two feature the same singers that he had in mind while writing the music for "The Coolin," completed in 1940. Although "The Coolin" was composed well into the twentieth century, Barber was known for his lyricism and for retaining many stylistic aspects of the Romantic era. Elliot writes, "Barber's music continued the traditions of nineteenth-century Romanticism and appealed to a broad audience… [The appropriate singing style] is based on nineteenth-century traditions, but with more faithful adherents to the details and the score and with *fewer* [emphasis added] wild tempo fluctuations, rubato, and portamento. This approach is, however, still rich, flexible, and

expressive."[211] Other background factors to the work's composition may include the Second World War, Barber's private relationship with Gian Carlo Menotti,[212] and nostalgia for his Irish heritage. Barber's uncle adored the poetry of James Stephens and exposed Barber to *Reincarnations*.

In 1918 James Stephens resurrected the texts of Anthony Raftery, a Gaelic poet who lived in the early nineteenth century. The poems had been translated twice in the early 1900s, so Stephens took a different approach by adding his twist to Raftery's work. These new poems sought to revive characters that Irish poets of the past had cherished. Stephens called the collection of twenty-eight poems, each based on different Irish folklore, *Reincarnations*. Barber also titled his work *Reincarnations* and set three of the poems, "Mary Hines," "Anthony O'Daly," and "The Coolin." In his book *Reincarnations*, Ron Jeffers writes, "The title of the work, *Reincarnations*, refers to the work of poets, translators, a composer, performers, and listeners to bring the memory of three Irish people to life once again."[213]

"The Coolin" refers to "the curl at the nape of a young woman's neck, which came to be the term for one's sweetheart."[214] Barber used the 1918 edition of Stephens' poem. It reads:

> [A-theme]
> Come with me, under my coat,
> And we will drink our fill
> Of the milk of the white goat,
> Or wine if it be thy will;
> [B-theme]
> And we will talk until
> Talk is a trouble, too,
> Out on the side of the hill,
> And nothing is left to do,

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[211] Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 284.

[212] "His professional and lifelong personal relationship with Gian Carlo Menotti was in full bloom." Ron Jeffers, *Reincarnations*, (Earthsongs: 2003) 29.

[213] Jeffers, *Reincarnations*, 44.

[214] Barbara Heyman, *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music,* (Oxford UP, 1992) 185.

But an eye to look into an eye
And a hand in a hand to slip,
And a sigh to answer a sigh,
And a lip to find out a lip:
    [C-theme]
What if the night be black
And the air on the mountain chill,
Where the goat lies down in her track
And all but the fern is still!
    [A'-theme]
Stay with me, under my coat!
And we will drink our fill
Of the milk of the white goat
Out on the side of the hill.

Regarding the relationship between the composer and the poem, Jeffers writes, "This pastoral love song…may have some autobiographical significance for Barber. Written during some of the happiest years of his life, it describes a relationship with tenderness, ecstasy, and cherished intimacy."[215] Barber set Stephens' poetry in F-major with compound time signatures using an *a cappella* mixed chorus. The key signature and compound meter present a gentle and pastoral relationship, promoting curves and rounded edges.[216] Barber's markings include dynamic and tempo indications, the opening marking of "tenderly," several *espressivo* markings, and articulation markings of tenuti, staccati, and *sf*. Barber also uses texture to add variety and contrast. In "The Coolin," portamento can be used to enhance elements of intimacy, highlight Barber's use of word painting and motifs, and also convey focal points within polyphonic sections.

As an effort to make peace with the modern aesthetic, portamento use has been thus far discouraged for the openings of works. Of the compositions featured in this chapter, Barber is the

[215] Jeffers, *Reincarnations*, 41.

[216] Noteworthy is the key and meter relationship to the second movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, also referred to as the *Pastoral Symphony*.

exception (as the case may be in other repertoires, if the music calls for it). The text in the first

measure is "Come with me, under my coat" and begins on a iii chord before introducing the

tonic.[217] The contour is abruptly altered, moving on the word "under." Here the sopranos have

an upward leap of a fourth and the basses leap down a fifth. The effect is passionate. Portamento

can technically and sonically smooth out and add warmth to the line. The portamento-free

precision likely desired by the modern ear can then take place for the consequent phrase that

occupies the following four measures. These two musical ideas return to conclude the piece and

frame the formal structure of the work.[218] There are several differences between the opening and

the end. For instance, the text is altered (including an exclamation mark after the word "coat!"),

and the overall dynamic level is softer. The softer, more gentle, yet confident (or perhaps urgent)

approach to the text calls for subtler gestures. Therefore, portamento is best not employed.

The B-theme begins with the single occurrence of the lower voices in a duet while the

treble voices are tacet. Here, the narration of the text becomes more introspective, —"And we

will talk until, Talk is a trouble, too,"—perhaps revealing insecurity about one's social adeptness.

For these few measures, the tenor voice maintains the melody. Whenever there is a downward

step or leap, portamento can be provided by the tenors. A couple of diminishing rapid glides will

add tenderness and give the line a soloistic, isolated quality.

Barber then sets the several texts in imitative polyphony. They are "and nothing is left to

do," "and a hand in a hand to slip," and "and a sigh to answer a sigh." All of these sections

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[217] This approach to chord progressions, mediant relationships, and voicing of chords were especially
popular in the Romantic period.

[218] Note that the poem, as laid out above, contains formal structure markings.

Figure 3.11. Samuel Barber, "The Coolin," mm. 11–12. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,* (G.Schirmer, 2011) 158.

contain a rhythmic motif of a dotted eighth, followed by a sixteenth, and then an eighth note (See Figure 3.11). Portamento can highlight both the imitation and the motif. Furthermore, the text and musical treatments of the word "sigh" practically beg for portamento. Barber also has the treble voices sing "ah" melismatically while the lower voices tiptoe (staccato markings) around the contact points of the "eye," "hand," "lip," and "sigh." Jeffers writes, "One helpful way of looking at the three *Reincarnations* as a whole is to compare those moments when the words become inadequate and the music alone can express the thought or feeling. These are the moments when the only text is the syllable 'ah.' In *The Coollun*[219] it occurs in the soprano and alto in mm. 22–23: eyes have been looked into, hands into hands have slipped, sighs have been answered, lips have found lips—the sensual has reached the level of ecstasy."[220]

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[219] Jeffers is quoted directly. In his book he refers to several translations of the Gaelic poem, and the spelling of "Coolin" varied by translator.

[220] Jeffers, *Reincarnations,* 41.

While portamento can be employed to amplify all of these music and textual attributes—to honor the modern aesthetic—portamento must be carefully placed. In figure 3.11 the imitated line begins in the soprano voice, followed by the tenor, alto, and bass. A single commonly placed portamento for each voice part will articulate this handing off of the melody without creating a caricature of the music. The "motherese" effect of portamento can be minimized with diminishing glides.[221] Singing through each line will allow an interpreter to find the most tasteful moments.

Keeping syllabic and word stress in mind is helpful. For example, in the phrase, "And nothing is *left to do*," the words "is" and "to" are the least important. To compensate for the rise in contour on "to" (so that it does not stick out), a portamento can be applied to the dotted eighth on the word "left." If sung with a decrescendo, both the second note of "left" and the word "to" will be deemphasized, aiding the both the proper stresses and the circular nature of the rhythmic unit. A similar treatment can be employed to the phrase "a hand in a *hand to* slip." There are several options for where to add portamento. A tasteful rendering will be achieved if the occasions are sparse and made with the intention of adding musicality to the phrase.

The text "sigh" appears many times in the work and may serve to inform a conductor as to where to place portamenti if the desire is to be consistent with its use. To clarify, the text "sigh" first occurs on the text, "and a *sigh to* answer a sigh" *after* the same musical motifs have been introduced on the texts concerning eyes and hands. Considering a portamento on the text "sigh" directly lends itself to word paining, one may choose to place the ornament in similar

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[221] "Motherese" refers to Leech-Wilkinson's term used to describe portamento's ability to invoke nostalgic, tender, innocent, infant-like emotions, as discussed in Chapter One.

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Figure 3.12. Barber, "The Coolin," m. 18. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,* 159.

ways for the phrases that occur earlier in the work. Alternatively, a conductor could wait to use

portamento, and apply it only to the "sigh's". Significantly, we already know from his 1940

recording of "A stopwatch and an ordnance map" that Barber would have applied portamento to

a motif, as he did so with his Curtis Institute ensemble for all three occurrences of the text "under

the olive tree." In "The Coolin," Barber already word paints "sigh" with a falling melodic

contour (See Figure 3.12). To avoid overusing the ornament, it should only occur on falling

intervals. Furthermore, when the descent spans several pitches (as it does in the treble parts of m.

18, see figure 3.12), a portamento should only happen once. Gliding to the final note of the

gesture is quite convincing. A slower portamento can be applied to the last

arrival of "sigh" sung by the basses in m. 25. At this moment, the rhythm is augmented to cue

the final sigh and complete this section of the piece.

One of the compelling reasons to consider choral portamento is that it expands the

spectrum between staccato and legato. This extension gives choruses more options to be

expressive and to capitalize on the poignant power of contrast. Therefore, after incorporating a bit of portamento throughout an extensive B-theme, the best way to create contrast would be to refrain from adding portamento starting at the C-theme in m. 26. The text, "What if the night be black?" is starkly different; it is musically pointed in shape, and the narrator is suddenly anxious that something might rob from the couple the entire experience. Jeffers describes it by stating, "The most dramatic change in text results in the chilling *forte* in m. 26."[222] One might choose to remain portamento-free for the remainder of the piece.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide various ways to include portamento into expressive, lyrical choral works. The addition of portamento should be considered where it might enhance and reveal compositional devices that composers used to enliven the music and/or the text. As the choral pieces outlined in this chapter are all well known and widely performed, the inclusion of portamento can vivify a performance by looking both to the past and to the future. This model aligns with what the HIP movement has done to blend historical research with imagination. The outcome is novel: a fusion of what music may have sounded like before the recording era with the ever-evolving priorities and tastes of the modern ear.

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[222] Jeffers, *Reincarnations,* 33.

CHAPTER IV: Practical Considerations

This chapter provides a model of instruction that introduces portamento into the choral rehearsal. The logistical steps of supporting and championing this expressive resource are laid out through examples from the repertoire as discussed throughout this project. Additionally, recordings of the singers performing the selected repertoire—with and without portamento—are compared. The portamento choices that the singers applied align with the suggestions made in Chapter Three. Several of these decisions were altered to respond to performance outcomes, which reshaped a final recording. The final recording and general feedback solicited from singers inform conclusions regarding the modern application of choral portamento into Romantic repertoires.[223]

Rehearsal Strategies

A stepwise approach toward the incorporation of portamento includes defining the ornament, providing examples, explaining its value, practicing with vocalise exercises, developing a system of notation, placing markings into the repertoire, and finally, rehearsing the repertoire with the expressive device. Singers need to be provided with a straightforward definition of portamento accompanied by a vocal example. Fortunately, singers will probably feel comfortable producing portamenti and glissandi as these techniques are used frequently, with great benefit, in choral vocalises. The choral instructor will then likely need to clarify the differences between glissando and portamento through modeling and by eliciting a choral response.

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[223] See Appendix B: "Proposed Performance Program."

A summary of why portamento fell from fashion will provide the performers with needed context and begin the discussion of how the choir might re-frame many of the negative associations through the modern aesthetic. Playing excerpts from early source recordings will help to shape a conversation about the portamento's value and reinforce the characteristics of the ornament in the context of repertoire.

Even in the course of a single listening, singers reported that their ears began to adjust to hearing portamento. Upon the next listening, the acceptance process restarted, but with less resistance than before. Eventually, the singers were able to articulate what they liked about the portamento for specific musical reasons. They also attributed to the device a sense of warmth, wonder, and nostalgia—likely the effect that some nineteenth-century composers and conductors intended. Taking the time to allow the acceptance of portamento to unfold, along with candid discussion, should enhance the singers' understanding of the ornament and their willingness to embrace it. Their investment and feedback can contribute to the collaborative spirit of the ensemble.

Teaching performers how to execute portamento is essential. The following two examples indicate that simply asking ensembles to add portamento has lackluster results. In Joseph's 2014 nineteenth-century performance practice preparation, she requested the choir to apply portamento throughout a single large work. Regarding the rehearsal process, Joseph reports, "Eventually the performers were able to implement a small amount of portamento in the places I requested, but it was hardly audible. At this stage, I decided to have them practice portamento out of context; before they could execute it in a performance, they needed to learn how to do it correctly. Once a comfort level was established, the choir and orchestra were able to utilize

portamento with relative ease and eventually even be expressive with it."[224] A similar finding

was noted by Philip when he recounted the efforts of Australian conductor Sir Charles

Mackerras. Philip writes, "Mackerras describes how he attempted to persuade the Royal

Philharmonic Orchestra to play Elgar's *'Enigma' Variations* with portamento somewhat like that

of the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra in Elgar's own recording. He told the audience that they were

to hear an attempt at 'period' portamento. The critic of *The Times* reported that it was a good

thing that he had told them, because the difference from normal playing was inaudible.

Mackerras said, 'They couldn't do it, because they were used to playing it 'cleanly.'"[225] Rather

than learning the music with portamento and experiencing varying degrees of trial and error, the

director can opt to teach portamento through vocalises over time while the ensemble rehearses

the repertoire without it. It is programatic to apply portamento to the repertoire in isolation after

the singers have established a familiarity within the choral context.

Portamento warm-ups can be introduced to the choir through a historical approach.

Excerpts and quotes from several treatises of the nineteenth and early twentieth century are

available to be shared with singers. The recordings of Hermann Klein (1856–1934), student of

Manuel García, can be shared and emulated by the choir to continue exploration along this

historical vein. Klein used the Gramophone to record Janet Spencer (1874–1948) singing one of

García's portamento exercises, revealing details of García's method through audio (See Figure

4.1). The recording of Spencer singing the exercises in Figure 4.1 is accessible via YouTube. The

choir should first sing without portamento, listen to Spencer, and emulate the source recording.

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[224] Joseph, "Nineteenth-Century Choral Practice," 28.

[225] Philip, *Age of Recording*, 223.

20. THE PORTAMENTO.*

Exercise on the Portamento.

Figure 4.1. Manuel Garcia, *Hints on Singing by Manuel Garcia, New & Revised Edition.* (New York: E. Ascherberg & Co, 1894) 22.

As with any vocal technique, asking the singers to think about and reflect on what it feels like to sing with portamento will help teach the singers how to better access the portamento and allow time to consider its vocal benefits.[226]

Additional recordings from the early 1900s of Adelina Patti can also be shared with the choir. Patti was a famous nineteenth-century opera singer and there are many recordings available, all rife with portamento. Also possibly of interest is the 1935 recording of Samuel Barber singing "Dover Beach" accompanied by the Curtis String Quartet. Both Barber and the string players frequently employ portamento.

When the choir begins to hear and sing portamento with more comfort and skill, a system of notation can be introduced. Then, the ornament can be practiced with its notation through portamento exercises that are inspired by, or pulled from the repertoire. If the portamento is to sound intentional, decisions will need to be made regarding its direction, duration, and dynamic. A final distinction is from what syllable and pitch the glide borrows its time (starting or arrival).

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[226] Singers who had experience with voice lessons expressed that the techniques and vocabularies (especially of Manuel García) were familiar to them, adding to the credibility of the ornament.

To align with both the trends of the nineteenth-century and the modern aesthetic, the conductor may choose to limit the execution of portamento to the anticipation grace. Singers are then told that the glide is always taken from the starting pitch, and the arrival note or syllable happens perfectly in time. Additionally, color-coding one or all of these markings into the score may be helpful.[227]

One approach to notation is to expand upon García's method of indicating portamento. García used slurs and grace notes to indicate a glide. As portamenti often occur during slurred moments, a shortened glissando-like marking of a straight line can be used as its indicator. This marking naturally incorporates the direction of the glide (See Figure 4.2). The dynamic shape of the glide is indicated by a crescendo or decrescendo marking and duration is marked with a note value similar to García's use of grace notes. Both dynamic and duration markings are placed above the staff just before the arrival pitch. In the case of faster tempi, there is a reasonable concern that singers (and choral directors) will become preoccupied with the exactness of the indicated portamento durations. Therefore, a starting approach to portamento duration is to create a spectrum limited to three possibilities. In order of commonality these are: 1.) The sixteenth note. Singers only need to think of these occasions as rapid, or as a "last possible second"
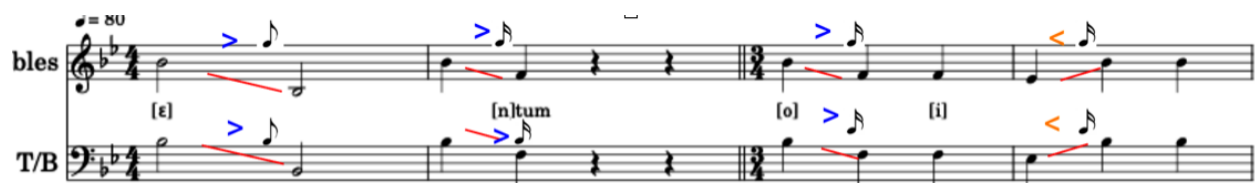

Figure 4.2. Repertoire-inspired vocalise with portamento markings, created by author.

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[227] For a score marking key, See Appendix C.

glide.[228] 2.) On rare occasions, an eighth or a quarter note. Indicates a slow glide that needs to be measured out. 3.) The abbreviation of "gliss." As soon as the starting pitch is firmly established, the glide may commence. Only one marking of "gliss." was placed in the repertoire for this project; essentially, it operated as a glissando. A final consideration, in the case of a diphthong or triphthong, is whether or not to indicate on what sound the glide should occur (either the final vowel or liquid consonant).[229] For this, an International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbol can be provided just before the arrival syllable (see m. 2 of Figure 4.2).

Choral Selections

Chapter Three provided specific applications of portamento for five works. That work was done in theory, removed from the context of choral signing in real time. This section will report the performance findings of three of those five works and argue which portamento decisions were effective in practice, and what was learned in hindsight. Both the aesthetic affects from the conductor's perspective and the singers' overall impressions of portamento will be shared.[230]

Bruckner, *Gradual, "*Locus iste*"

Portamento has been recommended for three sections of this piece: 1.) The rising motif for the text "inaestimabile" in bars 12–20. 2.) The final occurrence of "irreprehensibilis est" mm. 26–29, and 3.) The suddenly chromatic "Deo" in bars 40 and 41. The choice to start the piece with precision as the priority made the inclusion of portamento extremely effective. The contrast created by performing the first twelve measures without either vibrato or portamento

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[228] Singers were instructed to not bother with measuring out the exact durations.

[229] A sound formed by the combination of two or three vowels in a single syllable.

[230] Singers were asked to write reflections. See Appendix D.

created an opportunity for a sudden emotional shift. Instantly the musical palate was filled with more color and forward motion.

The text "inaestimabile sacramentum" occurs twice in succession with the second phrase elevated by both dynamic and pitch (the phrase is raised by a whole-step). The portamento was assigned whenever there were leaps on intervals of a third or wider. Bruckner placed these rising motivic leaps on different syllables at different times. Therefore, the glides were distributed at different moments throughout the phrase (see again Figure 3.3), enabling the portamenti to round the edges of larger leaps and to contribute to the building of energy without being overly apparent. Indeed, homophonic portamenti are much more noticeable to the listener and have the potential to distract one from the music.

Portamento can enhance the technical delivery of a descending octave and also work to taper the end of a phrase. For example, basses were assigned a portamento for their octave descent on the syllable "men" of "sacramentum" in measures 15 and 19. Both an eighth-note glide and a rapid glide (notated by a sixteenth note) were attempted. The rapid movement was more unified and nuanced, making it more aesthetically pleasing. Furthermore, the decrescendo assigned to the portamento helped shape the phrase and lighten the arrival of the lower note that singers tend to land on with too much weight. The upper three parts were assigned a similar descending portamento on the second, *fortissimo* "sacramentum," only. The addition of the portamento enhanced the intensity of the phrase on its second reiteration.

The text "irreprehensibilis est" is likely inspired by Gregorian chant. Bruckner starts this theme by setting the tenor section in momentary isolation; the treble voices enter one bar later. To bring attention to these lines, the repeated pitches and dotted figures were sung *secco*,

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Figure 4.3. Bruckner, "Locus iste," mm. 28–29. CPDL. Edited by José García Illa © 2019. Portamento markings added by the author.

angular, or more detached in quality. This articulation set up an opportunity to use portamento

for contrast (see again Figure 3.4). As shown in Figure 3.4, the portamento was initially to be

sung at different moments. However, the soprano portamento into bar 27 sounded awkward and

was moved to the prior syllable to be sung along with the altos, using a rapid glide. The moving

of the ornament solved two problems. First, singers reported that it felt unnatural to sing an

ascending portamento toward a plosive or fricative consonant such as "pre." The change also

made the interval smaller so that the phrase sounded legato while maintaining an elegant shape.

At the end of this phrase, the portamento in the treble voices for bar 29 (See Figure 4.3) should

be omitted. The combination of the *tenuto* and glide made it difficult for the singers to tastefully

shape the end of the section.

The final portamento assignment for "Locus iste" was the chromatic motion in mm. 40–

41 on the text "Deo" (See Figure 4.4). Initially—when a section was isolated—gliding through

several consecutive pitches sounded strange to the ear. Furthermore, most of the singers were

Figure 4.4. Bruckner, "Locus iste," mm. 39–41. CPDL. Edited by José García Illa © 2019. Portamento markings added by the author.

unaccustomed to sliding through microtones (as that approach did not align with how portamento is typically used for art songs), which required the singers to manage the movement of a half-step glide. However, by far, this was the most successful use of portamento from the conductor's perspective. In these two measures Bruckner surprises the listener by not only inserting the work's most Romantic display of harmony but also by breaking away from the ending of the phrase as anticipated. For these stand out measures, the portamento created a warm, celestial sound, further propelling the listener from the neo-Renaissance world into the Romantic. After hearing these two bars played back in a recording, the singers embraced a more profound commitment and the final recording was even more arresting.

Stanford, *Three Latin Motets Op. 38* "Beati quorum via"

The occasions for portamento in the Stanford include bringing attention to the rare moments of homophony, accentuating the text "Domini" that is accompanied by an atypical (for

the work) rhythmic unit, to draw attention to the melody during polyphonic moments, and to outline surprising harmonic shifts. In general, portamento was successful in achieving these goals. The most significant learning outcomes involve singer tendencies and a few minor omissions of portamento, as described in Chapter Three.

Texture is a major theme in Stanford's composition. From the conductor's perspective, portamento did well to shape and highlight the important motifs within the polyphonic context. Singers are often instructed on how to locate the melody or subject and to bring these lines into the foreground and back away when given a counter melody. This direction requires singers to pay attention to the ensemble as a whole. The addition of portamento—even just by way of markings—supports the singers' awareness and provides a special character giving further prominence to these occasions. Whether the singers were focused on the other five voice parts (or not), the inclusion of portamento auspiciously highlighted the appropriately featured melodies.

Additionally, the portamento did well to energize and shape phrases. For several occasions Stanford set the text "integra" with the singers coming together homophonically to end

Figure 4.5. Stanford, "Beati quorum via," mm.24–26. IMSLP. Boosey & Hawkes © 1905. Portamento markings added by the author.

the phrase (See Figure 4.5). The sudden shift in texture has an effect of relaxing the motion of the phrase, which is complemented by the melodic contour and choice of more-sustained rhythmic values. Before the homophony, the use of portamento successfully contributed to the articulation contrast, adding interest to the phrase and vitalizing the climax.

There were two related cases of portamento in practice that did not align with the anticipated goals of Chapter Three. First, the dotted quarter "Domini" text as sung by the lower three voices in bar 30 (See Figure 4.6). For this measure, the treble voices are tacet, leaving the three simultaneous glides exposed. The two other occurrences in which singers were assigned portamenti on this text were successful. The effect was less overt, so as not to draw attention away from the music and onto the ornament. Another factor as to why measure 30 is less successful may be due to the singers' tendency to rise in volume for ascending glides regardless of a direction to diminuendo. Many singers found ascending portamento with a diminuendo technically difficult. Not only is the production counterintuitive in habit, the rising contour naturally gives prominence to the higher pitches. The initial intention was to introduce a lilting quality; however, an ascending glide resulted in the opposite outcome. For added clarity, singers

Figure 4.6. Stanford, "Beati quorum via," mm. 29–31. IMSLP. Boosey & Hawkes © 1905. Portamento markings added by the author.

were asked to perform exercises in class that incorporated this technique on the repertoire for mm. 77–86 (see again Figure 3.9). A kinesthetic gesture was used to pull the sound back as the singers ascended. Despite the additional attention and learning strategies provided for this section, the performance outcome still revealed the singers' tendency to grow louder for ascending glides. The desired effect, when achieved, is elegant and beautifully highlights motifs amid the polyphony. However, it requires a great deal of compensatory practice, especially for wide intervals and in higher tessituras.

<div align="center">Barber, Reincarnations "The Coolin"</div>

Portamento eloquently accentuated many of the idiomatic musical gestures that Barber contributed to his composition. These include onomatopoetic ah's and sighs, word painting, and highlighting musical motifs in the context of polyphony. Recommended are three adjustments to the portamento plan, as described in Chapter Three.

The portamento assigned to the word "under" in the first measure worked very well in the descending tenor and bass voices. The glide for these two voices also nods to the gender roles that both the poetry and music use to underscore a romance between two persons. Therefore, portamento for the *ascending* leap of the fourth in the soprano part was omitted as it
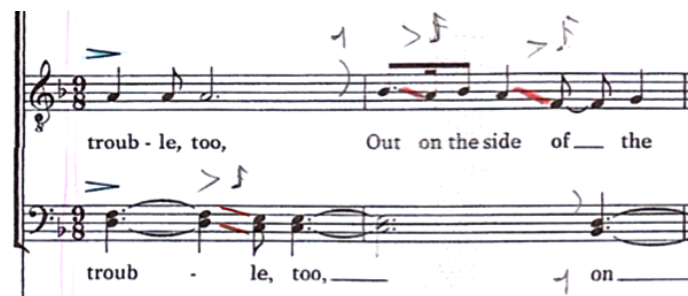

Figure 4.7. Barber, "The Coolin," m. 8–9. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,* 157. Portamento markings added by the author.

overshadowed the lower voices and quickly seemed inappropriate for the word painting of "under." The technical advantage of the portamento for the bass descent of a fifth beautified the timbre of the section, especially for the [ʌ] vowel.[231] Therefore, the basses were asked to glide again on the final page of music, whereas no other portamento was assigned.

The second adjustment recommended is to omit the baritone and bass portamenti in bar 8 (See Figure 4.7). The glide did not fit the way Barber set the bass lines in an echo-like fashion with the tenors. Adding portamento to the tenor melody did enhance the line, giving it a soloistic quality; the desire for an intimate effect was achieved at this moment of narration change.

The last finding concentrates on the technical ease of delivery. Singers had difficulties adding a portamento to notes of short duration. The wider the interval, the more rushed and awkward the result. For example, the treble voices were assigned a "gliss." leveled portamento (longest glide possible) on an eighth note moving from the text "a" to the word "sigh." The result was two-fold: the singers found executing this glide challenging, and the "a" syllable sounded clumsy and exaggerated. The removal of this particular portamento resulted in a total omission of all glissando-like portamentos. Perhaps the glissando is best saved for the special effect that composers occasionally notate and should not be added to notation by an interpreter.

Overall, the singers shared that portamento in "The Coolin" afforded them a wonderfully expressive tool. Singers were asked to simply sigh (outside of a musical context) and bring their attention to the natural shape, dynamic, and anything else they could observe. This onomatopoetic opportunity can be thought of in the delivery of the "ah" section as well. Singers also enjoyed the idea of word painting for the texts about slipping hands, and the abandonment

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[231] [ʌ] is like a schwa (as in "uh") but the syllable is stressed.

of there being "nothing left to do." The result was intensely moving. It seemed as though the

singers embodied the poetry and the music in a way that would not have been possible without

the aid of this moving and artistic tool, choral portamento.

Observation and Reflection

This section reports on a few valuable points that have not come up in previous contexts.

These findings include some of the unanticipated benefits that portamento afforded, while also

acknowledging that any emphasis placed on a particular musical strategy diverts attention from

another. Furthermore, there are still some areas where research is still needed. The observed

practical aspects found throughout this process will shape a conductor's methods of

incorporating the ornament.

Throughout the rehearsal process, singers were reminded that the portamento was to be

practiced to the extent that they could use it as an expressive tool. Singers understood that if they

approached portamento from a calculated perspective, the device would lose its meaning. In turn,

some singers reported that they were thrown off by the portamento duration markings.[232] These

singers found that they were distracted by trying to be exact, which made it difficult to also

concentrate on being expressive. Suggestions included replacing the small notes drawn

above the staff with longer or shorter red portamento lines to agree with spatial reasoning.

Alternatively, conductors could use an invented symbol to indicate a rapid or slow glide. For

homophonic portamenti, the prep of the conducting gesture can also indicate shape and duration.

For this project the basses were asked to follow the conducting gesture in bar 25 of "The Coolin"

for the final "sigh" (See Figure 4.8). The result was positive, but more real-time, in-person

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[232] Many singers also appreciated the exactness and attention to detail that the durations provided.

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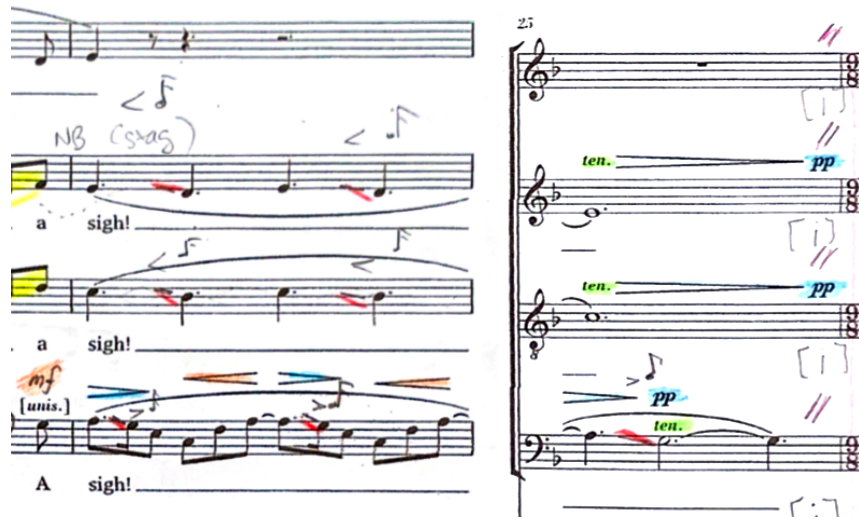
Figure 4.8. Barber, "The Coolin," m. 24–25. *Samuel Barber Complete Choral Music,* 157. Portamento markings added by the author.

research and rehearsal are needed to adequately report on the relationship of conducting gestures and the ornament. Another distraction reported by singers was their ability to execute portamento on short note values; singers frequently reported that they enjoyed singing portamento on notes of longer duration. The final element of emotive distraction was the mechanics involved to glide on the final sound of a diphthong or voiced consonant. Conversely, many singers appreciated having all of their questions about how to sing the different glides addressed and answered. One singer even thought of an additional indication that could be added regarding dynamic shadings. They found themselves wanting to arrive at a full dynamic level louder or softer after singing a portamento and recommended that any specific dynamic changes be assigned.

Two other beneficial observations involve the isolation of the music from the portamento. One element of preparing the choir that was found to be helpful was to ask singers first to perform music without portamento and then add it after the music was learned. This approach appeared to aid both the repertoire and vocalises. A practical use of portamento in the rehearsal is

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to use the device to revisit a difficult passage (perhaps a non-diatonic section), to clean up incorrect pitches. To illustrate, instead of employing repeated note drills, incorrect pitches can be reinforced by disguising their rehearsal to that of adding a tasteful portamento. In this respect, portamento contributes to the teaching arsenal of tricks, much like using dynamic contrast or vibrato to revisit a challenging passage.

Conclusion

Some listeners accustomed to a performance style of distanced objectivity will be surprised by historical recordings, and may find the presence of choral portamento in these performances to sound arbitrary, old-fashioned, even unrefined. As we have seen, the use of portamento was undeniably widespread. Historical sound recordings are time capsules preserving the collective experience of another age, revealing what composers and audiences alike knew and expected. These recordings demonstrate how some acclaimed conductors employed techniques of portamenti with confidence and intentionality, whereby composers including Gustav Mahler and Edward Elgar used specific notation to prescribe its use. Notably, choral portamento can be heard performed in 1940 under Samuel Barber's direction, in a piece that he wrote with a specific performing ensemble in mind. Outstanding teachers at the time instructed their pupils in this practice, endorsing portamento's significant power of expression.

Portamento is more than an occasional ornament but best regarded as an expressive resource of considerable value in musical and specifically choral performance. The occasional portamenti of solo singers and instrumentalists have long conveyed emotional expression in music. Nevertheless, since the mid-twentieth century, this expressive resource has been neglected and even abandoned in choral performance practice.

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Is it possible for a choir to refashion an unfamiliar practice to evoke a sense of comfort, warmth, and emotive nuance? Can portamento be integrated with an interpretative attention to detail that will show the considerable potential of this technique? Why has much recent choral music neglected this expressive musical tool?

This study has broadly surveyed aspects of the evolution of portamento in Western classical music. Original written and recorded sources were examined to show the context of the use of portamento and its considerable aesthetic value. Potentially this research can serve as a springboard to enhance and even revitalize the performance of aspects of choral music. The relationship of theory and practice, scholarship and performance, can thereby be promoted. On the basis of score study, portamento was embedded in several choral works in support of meaningful interpretation, conveying musical expression through the incorporation of this neglected expressive resource. Choral music will have advanced on a beneficial path once choral portamento regains the respect it deserves.

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APPENDIX A: Chronological Summary of Portamento's Definitive Evolution

Found in various treatises, encyclopedias, and performance practice texts.

*	Author	Year	Definition	Source Text
1	Tosi, Pier Francesco	1723	"To collide with the vowels, and to drag the voice gently from the high to the lower notes"	*Observations on the Florid Song*
2	Mattheson, Johann	1739	An appoggiatura "so lightly touched and slid that the [appoggiatura and its resolution] may hang together completely and emerge almost as a single sound."	*Der vollkommene Capellmeister.*
3	Mancini, Giovanni Battista	1774	"The gliding of the voice, a passing, tying of the voice, from one note to the next with perfect proportion and union, as much in ascending as descending. It will then become more and more beautiful and perfected the less it is interrupted by taking breath, because it ought to be a just and limpid gradation, which should be maintained and tied in the passage from one note to another.' "	*Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato*
4	García, Manuel	1800	"To conduct the voice from one note to another through all the intermediate sounds."	*García's New Treatise on the Art of Singing*
5	Schubert, Johann Friedrich	1804	"Melting of tones into one another."	*Neue Singe-Schule*
6	Corri, Domenico	1810	"Portamento di voce is the perfection of vocal music; it consists in the swell and dying of the voice, the sliding and blending of one note into another with delicacy and expression – and expression comprehends every charm which music can produce; the Portamento di voce may justly be compared to the highest degree of refinement in elegant pronunciation in speaking."	*The Singer's Preceptor*
7	Salieri, Antonio	1810	Around 1810, as *Kapellmeister* in Vienna, Salieri told the orchestra directors to enforce a prohibition against sliding between notes because it produced "an effect similar to whining children or yowling cats."	Letter to the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*
8	Ferrari, Giacomo Gotifredo	1818	"The carriage of the voice with dignified expression. In carrying the voice from one note to another, the second must receive a slight intonation, previously to its being articulated."	*Breve tratto di canto italiano,*

9	Häser, August Ferdinand	1822	"Utilizing the voice in the various possible nuances, and, in particular, carrying over and blending one note into another with completely equal strength and fullness (a perfect legato).… Absolutely to be distinguished from *Portamento* is the repulsive, out-of-tune passing through the pitches between two notes, similar to the sound produced on string instruments by the finger's rapid, yet gradual sliding, which many singers erroneously take for *Portamento*."	*Versuch einer systematischen Übersicht der Gesanglehre*
10	Bacon, Richard Mackenzie	1824	"The lessening the abrupt effects of distant intervals, or smoothing the passage between those less remote, by an inarticulate gliding of the voice from one to the other, whether ascending or descending."	*Elements of Vocal Science*
11	Garaudé, Alexis de	1826	[*port de voix* is] "an anticipation of the following sound to which one glides lightly with a rapid inflection, passing through an indefinite number of intervals imperceptible to the ear."	*Méthide complète de chant*
12	Vaccai, Nicola	1833	"To unite syllables… the manner of carrying the voice."	*Metodo pratico*
13	Baillot, Pierre	1834	*Ports de voix,* (the French term for portamento). Under "Melodic Ornaments: [he describes two types), "seamless legato" and an "audible slide."	*L'Art du violon*
14	Hamilton, James Alexander	1840	"The manner of conducting and sustaining the voice. To be free, yet firm and steady, is to have a good *Portamento*."	*A Dictionary of Three Thousand Musical Terms*
15	Bach, Albert	1883	"A mutual, intimate, connection of two notes in tone, each of the notes having a syllable of its own assigned to it."	*Musical Education and Vocal Culture*
16	Croker, Noris	1895	"To slur, to carry the voice, either quickly or slowly, from one note to another—whatever maybe the interval. The intervening notes are heard, but faithfully and indistinctly. This means that the tones between the notes that are connected by a slur are not to be heard as when the voice sings a scale, but as when a violinist slides his finger up the string, to gain the same effect."	*Handbook for Singers*
17	Joachim, Joseph & Moser, Andreas	1905	"[A]s a means borrowed from the human voice… the use and manner of executing portamento must come naturally under the same rules as those which hold good in vocal art."	*Violin-schule*
18	Auer, Leopold	1921	Famously quoted for his comment directed to string players: "the necessity to emulate good singers when it comes to sliding."	*Violin Playing As I Teach It*

19	Flesch, Carl	1924	Flesch distinguishes between glissando and portamento: "A glissando is necessary for changing positions and involves a continuous glide up or down the fingerboard. Glissandos are to be as inaudible as possible during performance. The glissando is only an incidental melodic addition, then, which is rarely heard. The portamento, on the other hand is an ornament employed intentionally as an 'emotional connection of two tones."	*The Art of Violin Playing*
20	Dodds, George	1927	"The word means 'to carry,' and the three forms generally used to indicate the same thing are *portamento, portando,* and *porta di voce.* To carry the tone may simply mean to sing with a connected tone as in the *sostenuto* I have just mentioned in previous paragraphs, or to carry the tone without a pause or rest for taking a breath from one phrase to the phrase which follows. It may, however, in certain places mean more than that, and indicate a sliding from one note to another, similar to the *glissando* performed by a violinist when sliding his finger-tip up or down the string of his instrument. The pitch rises or falls continuously until the second note is reached, but as no stop has occurred, no definite note is heard between the first and second notes which mark the limit of the *portamento.*"	*Practical Hints for Singers*
21	Henderson, William J.	1938	"Swooping' or "scooping"	*The Art of Singing*
22	*Initial entry: Maitland, John Alexander Fuller	*1898 −1975	"A gradual carrying of the sound or voice with extreme smoothness from one note to another... It is of frequent occurrence as a musical direction in vocal music."	*Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. 1-5*
23	Boyden, David D.	1980	"Portamento in the voice and in string playing is a legitimate effect but one whose use is easily subject to abuse."	*New Grove*
24	Crutchfield, William	1992	"In vocal terminology from the Romantic period to the present, the sound that results when the voice, in passing from one note to another, glides audibly through some or all of the intervening pitches without settling on any one of them."	*In Oxford Music Online and by Grove Music*

25	Brown, Clive	1999	"In singing, string playing, and wind playing 'portamento' had two basic connotations: both implied a smooth connection of one sound with another, but this connection could be seen either simply as legato or as a linking of different notes by a more or less audible slide through the intervening pitches. Simply a seamless legato and the second involving an audible slide…During the nineteenth century it became increasingly common to associate the term 'portamento' with a conspicuous slide, probably reflecting a growing tendency during the first two decades of the century for singers and string players to intensify the use of this technique as an expressive feature of their performance."	*Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*
26	Lawson, Colin & Stowell, Robin	1999	"A conspicuous slide between positions as an expressive device."	*The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*
27	Harris, Ellen T.	2001	"The connection of two notes by passing audibly through the intervening pitches."	*Oxford Music Online and by Grove Music*
28	Fredez, Roger	2002	"The portamento, indicated by a slur, is defined as a 'carrying of the voice' (i.e. a glissando) from one pitch to the next in such as way that time is taken from the first note and the second arrives on time with its proper pitch and syllable."	"Towards a Verdian Ideal of Singing: Emancipation from Modern Orthodoxy"
29	Miller, Richard	2004	Vocal Glissando [explained as an] "Extended Portamento"	*Solutions for Singers*
30	Stark, James	2003	"Portamento is closely related to legato. In a portamento the voice glides from one pitch to another, passing through all intervening pitches, in a slower manner than in a vocal onset or legato."	*Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*
31	Chase, Constance & Emmons, Shirlee	2006	"A *portamento* is a slide that moves to the second note of the interval swiftly, but starts moving at almost the last moment of the first note, allowing just enough time for the connecting pitches to be heard fleetingly."	*Prescriptions for Choral Excellence*
32	Potter, John	2006	"By portamento I mean the passing, the blending of the voice from one tone to another, with perfect proportion and union, in ascending as well as descending. The singing will be near perfection if the student can produce it without interrupting his tone by taking his breath perceptibly, because it must be a straight and limpid graduation that must pass, support and blend from one tone to another."	"Beggar at the Door"

| 33 | Milsom, David | 2011 | "The process of gliding from one note to another through all intermediate pitches. Its use is widespread in string, vocal, and trombone technique, though J. A. Clinton (*A Theoretical and Practical Essay on the Boehm Flute*, 1843), for example, suggests its application for flute and other woodwind instruments too. As an expressive device by which instrumentalists might emulate the inflections of the voice it was used extensively in the 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly by violinists, who documented a number of different applications of the effect. The string portamento, which may be said to have reached an apotheosis at the turn of the 20th century, had declined in popularity by the mid-20th century." | *The Oxford Companion to Music* |
| 34 | Kennedy, Joyce, Michael Kennedy, & Tim Rutherford-Johnson | 2013 | "Carrying. With the v. or a bowed instr, the carrying of the sound from note to note smoothly and without any break, hence very legato and momentarily sounding the pitches in between any 2 indicated by the notation." | *Oxford Dictionary of Music* |

* Citations for Appendix A:

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2. Will Crutchfield, "Portamento (opera)," In *Oxford Music Online* and by G*rove Music. (*Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992).
3. Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,* 94.
4. García, *García's New Treatise,* (1800):12.

5. Crutchfield, "Portamento (opera)."
6. Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 559.
7. Beverly Jerold, "Maniera smorfiosa, a Troublesome Ornament: A Response to Elisabeth Le Guin," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59: 2 (2006) 460.
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10. Crutchfield, "Portamento (opera)."
11. Garaudé, Alexis de, *Méthide complète de chant,* 30.
12. Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,*103.
13. Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 559.
14. James Alexander Hamilton, *A Dictionary of Three Thousand Musical Terms*, 138.
15. Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing,* 144.
16. Ibid., 146.
17. Joseph, "Revitalizing Interpretaion," 26.
18. Samit Ghiocel Golescu, "The Recorded Heritage of Willem Mengelberg and its Aesthetic Relevance," (MDA diss., Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014) 74.

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19. Finson, "Special Reference to the Music of Brahms," 464.
20. Dodds, *Practical Hints for Singers,* 33.
21. Ellen Harris, "Portamento(i)" In *Oxford Music Online* and by G*rove Music. (*Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).
22. Potter, "Beggar at the Door," 523.
23. Ibid., 523.
24. Crutchfield, "Portamento (opera)."
25. Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 558.
26. Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music,* 145.
27. Harris, "Portamento(i)."
28. Fredez. "Towards a Verdian Ideal of Singing: Emancipation from Modern Orthodoxy," 244.
29. Richard Miller, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers* (Oxford UP. 2004), 150.
30. Stark, *Bel Canto,* 165.
31. Emmons and Chase, *Prescriptions for Choral Excellence,* 34.
32. Potter, "Beggar at the Door," 525.
33. Milsom, David. "portamento." In *The Oxford Companion to Music*. : Oxford University Press, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-5292.
34. "portamento." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, edited by Kennedy, Joyce, Michael Kennedy, and Tim Rutherford-Johnson: Oxford University Press, 2012.

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APPENDIX B: Proposed Performance Program

In spring of 2019 plans were set in place to perform a doctoral recital based on this project, utilizing UCLA's Chamber Signers. Before the start of 2020, the repertoire was selected in alignment with the research that had been completed. The program that had been set in motion is listed below.

In March 2020, just weeks before the onset of the Spring Quarter, UCLA closed its campus and switched to remote learning to protect the student population from the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19. The choir rehearsal therefore took place through a remote conferencing platform. Each week the students learned more about portamento in meetings and participated in director led portamento exercises. Asynchronously, the signers learned three pieces (Bruckner, Stanford, and Barber) with the assistance of detailed score markings, practice tracks, and conducting videos. Student assessment and "rehearsal" was adapted; they turned in multiple recordings of themselves singing each work. These separate tracks were then lined up to create a virtual choir. Based on the recordings, singers listened, reflected and applied director-created notes, adjustments, and corrections to prepare for the final recording.

Original Program:

Three Graduals WAB 23
"Locus iste"   Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)

Vier Quartette Op. 92
"O schöne Nacht"
"Warum"   Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Deux chœurs Op. 68
"Les fleur et les arbres"   Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Requiem Op. 48
"Offertoire"   Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Three Latin Motets Op. 38
"Beati quorum via"   Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

"O salutaris hostia"   Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

Three Choral Responses, Op.8
"Peace I Leave With You"   Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867–1944)

Reincarnations
"The Coolin"   Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

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APPENDIX C: Keys to Score Markings, as Provided to Singers

KEY to Sources Markings!

* portamento markings will be added later in RED!

⌐ unison ⌐ = listen & look in

NB ⌠ = No breath

' = catch breath (♪ ↑ ← ex. of measured/timed breath)

stag = Stagger breathe

Senza or senga'vib = minimal vibrato

Box = important word

— tenuto = lean into §nöt (appog.)

[Text] Stress & lit-e(ral) translation (on top) ⌐poetic translation to the side
accented (unstressed)

// = Break in time
glot = gentle glottal start

⊄ = conducted in 4

△ = conducted in 3

▬ = louder dynamic (draw your attention) colors

▬ = Softer "

▬ = (yellow) important part/note

▬ = articulation (or vibrato) change

▬ = change in tempo or meter

Key to PORTAMENTO markings

what you will see # NOTATION

<♪   >♪[i]   >gliss

le   Be-a-ti   sigh

what to do # execution

* — = glide here!

* ⟨ or ⟩ diminuendo during glide
crescendo

* [i] = IPA symbol, glide occurs on this sound (diphthong)

DURATION

① ♪ = glide last possible moment, rapidly

② ♪ = Last 8th (measured out)

③ gliss = establish starting pitch & then glide

* Always arrive on arrival pitch ON TIME/borrow from the starting pitch

Reflections on Singing Choral Music with Portamento

The singers were asked to write a paragraph reflecting on their experiences with choral portamento. To aid in the process, the following prompts were provided for the singers to consider:

Describe your individual experience:

1.) Learning the technique in the choral context (about portamento and how to execute it)

2.) Performing (singing, technical)

3.) Comfort in employing the ornament

4.) Aesthetic experience

What markings/instructions did you find to be the most useful?

What suggestions for improvement would you like to offer?

What advice would you give to future singers (or choir directors)?

Do you have any comments on the:

1.) Placement of portamento

2.) Frequency (how often)

3.) Appropriateness to the piece

4.) Intensity (duration & dynamic)

5.) Relationship to the expressive qualities of the music?

The following are anonymous quotes collected from thirty-six singers, used by permission. The

author has selected excerpts of the entries with the aim of providing an honest reporting of

singers' experiences and opinions. Edits were made to remove comments specific to the remote

learning process.

> The biggest overall concept I learned from experimenting with portamento was that it is a viable and underused form of expression that choirs are not taking advantage of. While it was quite difficult to get used to technically and aurally, it was well worth it, as it felt very fun and expressive. I found that the portamento was most effective when it goes with the text it is being sung, like "sigh" in the Barber. Also, I tended to prefer the sound of the portamento when it had a quicker ascent or descent, rather than dragged out over a note. I would hope that choir directors would utilize portamento more often, as it can be a very effective and beautiful when executed correctly and at the right spots in the text. It was a pleasure to be exposed to this, and I hope to translate this into not just choral singing, but to my solo singing as well.

> Technically, I found portamento markings on descending intervals to be the easiest. These are the locations in which I most commonly add portamento in my arias or art songs. Ascending portamento was slightly more difficult when the interval was larger. Fear of sounding as though I were "scooping" up to the note made it difficult to simply go for it. However, once I figured out how to carry the voice rather than slide on it, it became progressively easier. I considered the markings indicating the length of the portamento to be the most useful. Sometimes it feels as though you are sliding forever; having an exact measurement to go off is crucial. Furthermore, they aid in ensuring all of the singers are as together as possible.

> Demonstration is key for choir directors seeking to incorporate choral portamento. Otherwise, there will be several different interpretations and unity will be difficult to achieve. After practicing together via Zoom and listening to the examples, I had a clear idea of what was expected, and I was able to implement that into my recordings. My advice to future singers is to simply try out several different sounds. It is easiest to go with the typical "scoop" sound first, just to acquire an understanding of the action. Next, I would increase speed so that the portamento is not drawn out. Finally, I would encourage connection to breath support and attention towards dynamics so that a carefully refined sound is produced. Regarding placement of portamento, I thought each instance was quite tasteful. I did not think there were too many either. I found that the additions supported the message of each piece and helped bring out the expressive qualities of the music.

> Applying portamento to choral singing has been an eye-opening experience for me as a singer. Portamento, simply defined as "sliding between two notes," can create profound emotional intensity when applied selectively. After singing three pieces with and without portamento, my opinion is that portamento is most effective when used sparingly. In listening to old recordings that used portamento in every measure, it sounded so bizarre and foreign to my ears. I love portamento because of its natural and expressive nature; by applying it so frequently, it feels more forced and ceases to stress the importance of certain notes. I also appreciate when portamento is used onomatopoetically, as with the word "sigh" in Samuel Barber's "The Coolin." By sliding between the notes, the sound quality becomes like a dramatic exhale and breathes life into the word.

> Singing portamento is very physically comfortable. Most of my favorite warm-ups use portamento as a means to connect my lower and higher ranges. However, the difficulties in

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singing portamento in choral music lie in the placement and dynamic. In our three pieces, portamenti are notated as either eighth notes or sixteenth notes to discern how long before the second note to begin sliding. They are also often given dynamic changes to dictate which note should be loudest. I find singing an ascending portamento with a diminuendo more technically difficult. The alto part at measure 53 of "Beati quorum via" demonstrates this difficulty well. I have enjoyed the challenges of approaching portamentos with technical and artistic integrity.

I have found this experience to be fascinating. In general, I am finding that it feels very natural to sing with portamento as it feels very legato or "vocal." I really like the notation of the red line between notes. This is very clear and easy to read. With that said, I found the rhythmic notation relatively unnatural and difficult to execute exactly. Another challenge that I ran up against was portamento on words with diphthongs or even glides. You have consistently notated these throughout the scores but I am finding that this sometimes feels unnatural too. Part of this feeling might be due to simply getting used to this system. Small, descending intervals are the most difficult. However, the portamento that is most difficult is when the arrival note begins with a consonant. Ascending portamento made reaching the higher note easier. Yet, smaller intervals sound better since portamento over large intervals scoops too much; adds a sense of tenderness.

I think this technique would only be successful with experienced singers. It needs to be extremely calculated, it requires strict timing. Differentiating between a glissando, portamento on an 8th note versus a 16th note makes this technique like an exact science and effective for a choir trying to sing in a unified manner. Our work with portamento seems to be enhancing my ability to control my voice. Adds a lot of emotional depth to the piece.

I found it difficult (when placed on notes of short duration) to sing in a way that sounded beautiful rather than rushed and awkward. The contribution of portamento to the expressive qualities of the piece is huge though. I love anything that shows the emotions of a piece of music and I think portamento does that perfectly if placed where there is specific dramatic or emotional reason in the text.

The modern ear's acceptance of this is hinged on our ability to deliver portamento as a subtle, and effective nuance.

I found it hard to get out of my body's muscle memory created by years of "proper" choir technique, and allow myself to let my voice have freedom in between the written notes. I found myself wanting to go to the extreme and scoop into notes instead of a controlled portamento. In particular, the space between notes that were either sixteenth notes or eighth was apart, or that were a half or whole step apart proved to be difficult to navigate. I am sure there were times when those portamento were barely audible. But on the opposite spectrum, I enjoyed releasing myself and allowing my body to stray from what it was used to. When I achieve what I thought was a well-placed portamento, I could actually feel it in my body that it was placed properly. I felt like a Disney character! There are definitely challenges and adding this new technique, but the payoff that is produced and gorgeous music, it is worth it.

Portamento in a choir setting was different because I've never sang portamento in choir because it could sound messy, so hearing our chamber singers do it and have it sound so beautiful was a whole new experience.

Employing portamento within choral music was an action with which I became quite comfortable. I enjoy the way it sounds, and I feel as though it aids with expressivity. While singing solo music, particularly of the Bel Canto style, I always find it helpful to add portamento as an acting or expressive choice. Personally, adding portamento to these pieces brought more life to them and helped me connect with the music.

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Listening to the recordings that Desiree brings to class has been especially illuminating in how to perform the portamento. I am still not fully comfortable with the ornament because when given permission my voice likes to slide from note to note, therefore it is a challenge for me to strike a balance for what is needed in these pieces.

Experiencing *portamento* for the first time was somewhat comfortable as I recalled the process being similar to vocal warm-ups. I have not used the device until Chamber Singers, where the expressive device is being applied within a choral context. From my experience, *portamento* is a beautiful, expressive musical device that should only be used in critical cadential phrases throughout a piece of music, especially in the choral setting.

As a trained classical and choral singer, the idea of portamento in core music is very radical. Learning about portamento was really interesting and I thought it was easy to get the hang of reasonably quickly. In vocal warm-ups there is often a lot of sliding involved, so portamento itself was not difficult to produce. I'm comfortable with the ornament, and I think the way we used it in our music was reasonable and effective. Listening to the old recordings really helped me conceptualize the intended effect of portamento.

I found portamento especially moving in "The Coolin." For the smaller valued notes, it was harder for me to feel the physical movement from note to note. I used a more mental approach for smaller note values. For notes larger than a quarter, I would concentrate on the physical change in my body as a used portamento. I enjoy listening to portamento when is used in an SATB-like format instead of a solo-like formats. As a violinist, I have always used a calculated approach when shifting by counting rhythms. Trying a calculated approach when using portamento did not work for me in singing. I actually had to feel it in order to produce a proper portamento technique. It may be interesting to get a linguists' perspective on portamento and how the body physically reacts to the style as well as the tendencies that musicians make when shaping vowels and consonants while using portamento.

The idea of incorporating portamento into a choral context was certainly a new concept for me. I found the exercises we practiced in the beginning of class together, practicing a couple measures at first without a port, and then warming up to it slowly, very beneficial. I found that using port markings on half steps to be slightly confusing, and tried to interpret it as just being as legato as possible. Aesthetically, in the beginning of the quarter I did not like the sound of the choral portamento. This is probably due to the fact that there are different styles in choirs now and that kind of scooping sound is something that has been discouraged and frowned upon. In hearing the result of the port in our recordings, there were some moments that I found to be truly beautiful. I think the more I am exposed to these old recordings, the more I appreciate it. There's something delicate, and incredibly human about it that makes me believe this should absolutely be incorporated into choirs again.

Throughout my collegiate choral training I have spent much time being focused on singing with a healthy straight tone, proper blending, pitch/rhythmic accuracy, etc. Because of this, I had some trouble implementing a new technique that I was previously told to be "incorrect" in the world of choral technique. Our discussions on choral portamento proved eye-opening and allowed me to expand my knowledge and taste for what is considered "good" choral singing. Thank you for opening up these conversations!!!! Upon implementing portamento in Chamber Singers this quarter, I found some portamento to be much easier to include than others. Across the board, portamenti in straight tone sections proved significantly more difficult for me than portamenti in more dramatic sections that included vibrato. I think this is because of my want/need to be hyper accurate in the more exposed nature of straight tone. I think the use of portamento has improved my musicianship and attention to detail and stylistic nuance in a piece.

Like with any solo piece, the process of implementing portamento I think would resemble a trial and error process to see what works. That being said, I think that small gestures of choral portamento have the ability to convey a message in the same way that dynamics, tempi, phrasing, and the like have.

Especially between small intervals, it is very difficult for me to land accurately on the next note. I think I get a little "stuck" in the "slide" and it takes a lot of extra concentration for me to still be accurate. Now in terms of the music, I think portamento should be used VERY sparingly. It creates a magical, almost sparkling feeling, but if overused, the effect wears off and means nothing. I also think that portamento is most effective in the middle or at the end of a piece, and not at the beginning. That way a clear tone and tonal center can be established before bringing in this embellishment. I found it especially helpful that each portamento was given a dynamic (crescendo or decrescendo), and each time I saw a portamento marking with a dynamic marking, I was reminded to control it.

The piece that stood out to me the most was "The Coolin." Adding portamento to this piece created an ethereal feeling that truthfully felt fitting. Although it sounds a little weird, it made sense. The part when everyone says, "sigh" was absolutely thrilling to sing because of the portamenti. It was word painting!! When we moved to the other two pieces, the portamento sort of fell into place naturally. It added to the expression of the piece, and felt like an emotional guide. It felt like speaking! Overall, I have to say that I felt comfortable singing the music with portamento and feel as though more choral pieces should include it.

Employing the technique itself was fairly simple, as I have used it in solo singing for a long time. However, employing the technique in the way that was asked for took a lot more practice. I understand the idea of a fast and late portamento, but getting my body and brain to do it in the short time allotted without slowing down was a challenge. Particularly the glissando in "The Coolin."

I was able to learn how many choirs sang in the past and how portamento was incorporated into their sound. I believe I also got a lot from warming up and practicing portamentos to feel it in my voice.

Adding portamento to our three pieces was an interesting experience for me. Practicing portamento made me realize that I already do use portamento when singing solo pieces, in places where it comes naturally. I have been enjoying returning to those solo pieces, leaning further into this technique, and experimenting with using it in various places. One thing I noticed was that out of the places where portamento was marked, some came quite naturally to me, and others were much more difficult and sounded wrong to my ear. With a few exceptions, the portamentos that ended on a vowel sounded much better to me and were easier to sing than portamentos that ended on a consonant. The more prominent the consonant, the harder the portamento was for me to execute. By contrast, most of the portamentos in the soprano line of "The Coolin" ended on vowels and sounded and felt natural to me. I particularly liked the descending half-note ports in "The Coolin" I thought they were subtle, tasteful, and very emotive.

The physicality of singing with portamento was very different from what I am used to. To an extent, the feeling of singing with portamento felt more natural than without, I find it to lie in the fluidity of the notes when needing to connect notes, along with individual words. As to the markings in the score, I felt like they were perfectly adequate and clear in conveying the ornament. I don't think it should be something that stands out or a conscious inflection in the singing, being comparable to different attacks on notes and articulation of vowels and consonants. Something that doesn't affect the audience's perception but rather complements it. Something I have found fairly interesting after having portamento being brought to my attention is that if you listen to old-school classically trained musical theater actors (such as Mandy Patinkin, Alfie Bo,

Ismelda Staunton, Patti Lupone), hints of portamento (though I'm not sure you can call it that) can be heard in their articulation of select words.

The harder portamentos were the ones where we were required to slide up, as this felt the most unnatural. Sliding down was more reminiscent of the slides one hears in pop music, so that definitely made it easier. Overall, I would say that the choice of repertoire was quite exceptional for an implementation of portamento, especially the Stanford. I quite enjoyed singing that piece with the portamento, and it felt perfect to do so. In terms of overall frequency, I felt your artistic choice was perfect. You were selective in your placements, but they also felt like they belonged.

I felt that the close intervals, particularly major and minor seconds, were the easiest to execute because it felt more natural. Interestingly, I also had a lot of success with very large intervals, I'm not really sure why, but I struggled to execute the medium-sized intervals like thirds, fourths, and fifths. After listening to our pieces with and without portamento, I feel that I prefer the music for the most part without portamento, however there are some moments where it was very effective and appropriate. For me, it does sound a lot like scooping and using it frequently in music sounds a bit sloppy. However, in moments of a piece that are climactic moments, I feel like a dramatic use of portamento can really bring out the emotion of the phrase.

The greatest outcome of this for me was improvement in my personal sound, as far as singing more legato. In my private voice lessons, I have been working to develop a more legato sound overall, since my teachers have said I tend to sing very "notey." Working on portamento and studying it in class seemed to help this a lot, as now I was practicing this sort of "sliding" sound for all of my music. Even though it initially felt very uncomfortable to employ the ornament, as I've worked hard to not slide in my day-to-day singing, I find myself enjoying the sound of the technique more and more as time continues. Before it was clarified for the class that the portamento markings would only occur in specific places, I thought the sound was too extreme. Once it was clarified, though, I began to enjoy it as a technique for expression and the color it provides to a vocal line.

The largest issue I had in performing the technique was between short note values and between the interval of a half step. I think this is because in our Western musical system that we're used to, the smallest interval is a half step so our (or at least my) ears and body made splitting that interval a difficult, conscious effort, therefore giving me trouble especially in quick passages where I didn't have as much time to "think" about it. I honestly was unfamiliar with the sound of portamento in a choral setting; the aesthetic fit so well that of the clips we heard in class - the old, warm, fuzzy and expressive recordings. I think the portamento was extremely effective in this repertoire for creating that same warmth and authentic sort of sound; I really don't mind the sliding between pitches, I feel like the perceived inaccuracy to us unfamiliar with the sound gives the performance a really endearing and authentic character.

When listening to the completed tracks, I was amazed at how interesting the pieces sounded with the addition of portamentos. The eighth-note/sixteenth-note portamento markings were helpful to determine how quick/short or long I should make the portamentos.

Technically speaking, portamento actually felt really good in my voice. It felt like a completely natural and healthy technique to use. I never felt uncomfortable or that I was straining my voice in any way, which is probably a very compelling argument for the use of portamento! Aesthetically, I truly didn't understand the purpose of it at first. I thought that there was a real risk of the sound being unrefined in the choir. Even in the recordings shown to us by Desiree, I thought that the sound was often fuzzy and directionless. My opinion on the utility of portamento changed with a certain recording showed in which portamento catalyzed a fairy-tale, Disney-esque sound [Bruckner's "Ave Maria"]. It was truly magical! I was then inspired to use

portamento in a way that adds to the emotion of the piece and the human aspect of it, just as Disney has managed to do so effortlessly.

Notationally, your symbology and exercises were exceptionally easy to read and to understand the shape/intent behind the portamento. The speed, increase/decrease in dynamic were clear, and while not intuitive technically, it was visually quite natural to understand. My only comment would be to dictate dynamic changes as a result of the portamento. I found myself wanting to crescendo/decrescendo at least a full dynamic marking up/down during the portamento, which often left me confused when a new dynamic marking occurred in the piece, or struggling to return to where I started in anticipation of an upcoming dynamic change.

At one of our weekly rehearsals, Balfour explained her well-organized legend in front of the musical scores. This legend contained sixteenth and eighth-notes with marked crescendo and decrescendo above them. This use of symbols denoted singers how much portamento was to be used in the scores; eighth-notes being a fair amount whereas the sixteenth-notes are to use the device quickly. These notes would be seen throughout the choral works. Balfour's system of markings and instructions are apparent to the singer as to how much portamento is to be used in a particular section in a piece. This system of information eliminates questions of how much and where the expressive device is to be used. Since experiencing this form of information, I will recommend other musicians who can produce portamento to adopt a similar system of notation in their own repertoire.According to Balfour, portamento is no longer being used in the choral setting. Changes in musical taste may add to the reason why the expressive device lost its presence in choral ensembles. In any case, future choral directors and participants should at least recognize portamento as a beautiful and moving musical device and experience it in one performance. As for the choir director, portamento is another powerful tool that can be added to their arsenal. Portamento must not be present in every performance, per se, but rather an opportunity to widen the performance possibilities for the choral performer.

Overall, the experience I had learning, recording, accepting feedback, revising, and rerecording these pieces was very positive. The lectures were very informative and interesting— they also really helped sell the idea of portamento as a performance practice technique worth consideration. My choir ears have been trained to avoid sliding, so at first I was skeptical of some of the older recordings we listened to, but once I reached a certain level of exposure to the recordings and evidence of intention laid out in Desiree's presentations I became very open to the idea. When it came to implementing the portamento in the music I felt good, it felt natural. I think the warm ups we did in rehearsal were very helpful. I love that I was a bit of a snob about it at first, but now see it as an important tool that every choir should have in their arsenal. The scores that Desiree assembled for us were very clear. The markings were intuitive and easy to read. I felt that the placement of portamento in the score was always justified—it seemed to always match the mood/affect of the music.

I remember you saying how portamento was criticized in the past as excessively sentimental, like a mother's coos to a child. Indeed, participating as a listener or singer in a choir is the closest thing society has for allowing hundreds of people to participate in a group hug. In this sense, bringing back portamento is a deep acknowledgement of that physical closeness and responsiveness, which we all miss dearly in the present times, and is perhaps a heroic or quixotic attempt to make even deeper what choirs do best. This makes the Chamber Singers' efforts, under your leadership, especially hopeful in the present time.

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APPENDIX E: Final Recordings

Also submitted for this present thesis project are the final recordings of the UCLA

Chamber Singers performing Bruckner's "Locus site," Stanford's "Beati quorum via," and

Barber's "The Coolin."

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