

Kenneth Frazelle's *Appalachian Songbooks* (1989) and
Doug Borwick's *Southern Comfort* (1989)

An Investigation into
Singing Contemporary American Art Song Requiring
Authentic Southern Regional Dialects

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates vocal performance of art songs requiring authentic and appropriate regional dialects of the American South. Through close analysis of performance practice in American opera, musical theatre, and art song, this document follows the existence of regional southern dialects on the stage from the early 1800s to today's practice. Evidence of specified regional southern accents is discussed regarding literary depictions in librettos, lyrics, and dialogue. Other topics include the ways regional nuances and colloquialisms differentiate southern regional accents, the existence of a generic "southern" accent to stand for any representation of rural whites, and, briefly, the nonspecific ways African American southern dialects are usually rendered. Art song selections from Kenneth Frazelle's *Appalachian Songbooks* (1989) and Doug Borwick's *Southern Comfort* (1989), which I studied, recorded, and transcribed into singer's IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), are the central texts of this discussion. The recording can be accessed online at <https://soundcloud.com/nina-c-garguilo/sets/southern-study-through-song>.

This research will benefit the performers of American art song that specifically requires "white" dialects, the native and non-native speakers of some Southern-American dialects, and scholars who seek to promote authentic performance practice of southern oral tradition in concert music.

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Introduction: Regional Southern Accents in the Classical Vocal Arts

“But, you don’t sound like you’re from the South...”

When someone learns that I am from the American South, that information is almost always met with some form of the question, “Where is your accent?” Years of professional vocal training and living outside of the South have aided me in neutralizing the inflections of my youth. This change results from a conscious effort to ensure that my words, rather than my inflections, are most important. I can return to the dialect of my past whenever desired. Still, this constantly reiterated expectation of “Southernness” has made me curious when listening to classical vocal music based on American Southern themes. *Where is the accent?*

Having been raised in the Memphis/Little Rock and northwestern Mississippi regions, my ear was accustomed to the nuances of highly differentiated Southern accents. Family and friends spoke living examples of the Alabama, Texas, or North Carolina nuances. When Southerners are portrayed on television, film, or staged plays, these dialects can seem exaggerated, even to a point of caricature. Television’s Gomer Pyle from *The Andy Griffith Show* is a great example of this phenomenon.¹ Musical theatre productions such as *Show Boat* (1927), *Big River* (1985), and more recently, *Floyd Collins* (1996) with stories set in southern states, are familiar examples that require thick Southern dialects. Operas set in the South also vary in the extent to which an accent is used, but in art song, concert pieces, and song cycles, the regional accent is de-

¹ On the other hand, *Dallas* (1978-1991) was true to the local accent. Additionally, authenticity could vary in shows depending on actors’ linguistic genius; Buddy Ebsen was consistently persuasive in reflecting an Ozarks dialect in *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962-1971).

emphasized to a point of complete disappearance. Extensive training in the classical vocal arts aims to achieve full tone, rounded vowels, and an open throat. When accomplished classical singers turn to American art song based on colloquial texts, the authentic interpretation of dialect is often forgotten and nearly invisible. Yet, composers frequently instruct the singer to apply some sort of regional accent when appropriate. This requirement is evident in a common truncation of words ending in “-ing,”—printed in the score as “n’”—or in program notes and other indications from the composer.

Exploration of contemporary American art song offers the opportunity to focus on the most sonorous, yet still regionally appropriate Southern accents, the goal being to perform the songs more authentically. As evidenced by my reference list, I will make great use of research on Southern regional accents in the linguistic and literary disciplines. The tendency to genericize, as when texts from the vastly different settings of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* (1934) and Floyd’s *Susannah* (1953) sound similar, will be addressed in this paper. However, the research focus of this document is primarily on traditions in the southeastern “white” communities with which I am most familiar.² Certain traditions and customs of the Southern accent are traceable to specific social groups. However, it is nearly impossible to know precise origins, whether accents were preserved among generations, or if they evolved in response to communication with other groups. The variety of people who migrated to Georgia from the 1730s-1750s, for

² No community comprises only one ethnicity and even majority-white communities, for example, readily absorb pronunciations from its minority members. Terms “white” and “black” are used here to differentiate between communities most influenced by British Isles-American and African-American populations, respectively. Like African American dialects, certain forms of African American music, e.g., spirituals, are more often studied than comparable genres of Anglo-American music.

example, is identified in *Baptist Offspring, Southern Midwife*:

Georgia's cultural and religious mixture of Anglicans, Scots Presbyterians, French Huguenots, Swiss Calvinists, Lutherans from Salzburg, Moravians, and Sephardic Jews differed significantly from the more homogenous society in northern colonies and soon produced hearty conflict, most significantly concerning the ongoing question of slavery.³

For deeper analysis of the African American dialect, which has received more scholarly attention to date, see studies by William T. Dargen and Lisa Cohen Minnick in the reference list. This research will benefit the performers of American art song which requires "white" dialects, the native and non-native speakers of some Southern-American dialects, and scholars who seek to promote the linguistic practice of Southern oral tradition.

The first part of this project, completed on July 1, 2016, is a recording which features music by composers Kenneth Frazelle (b. 1955, North Carolina) and Doug Borwick (b. 1952, Iowa) and clarifies linguistic models, obstacles presented, and solutions to challenges associated with authentic performance of Southern-inspired art song. Pianist Aimee Fincher and I recorded eight selections from Kenneth Frazelle's *Appalachian Songbooks I & II*: "Charmin' Birdie," "The Cuckoo," "Barbra Allen," "Our Good Man," "Groundhog," "Billy Boy," "In East Virginy," and "Pretty Saro." We also recorded selections from Doug Borwick's *Southern Comfort*, including "Southern Fiction," "Love," "Sisters," "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Immersion," and "Southern Fiction Reprise." Borwick's *Southern Comfort* was chosen because his vernacular texts reflect Southern cultural memes; these include elements of Southern Baptist worship,

³ Kay Norton, *Baptist Offspring, Southern Midwife—Jesse Mercer's Cluster of Spiritual Songs (1810): A Study in American Hymnody*, Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2002, 14.

rural lifestyle, and colorful evocations of phenomena well-known in the South (e.g., the “wet heat of North Carolina”).⁴

Before this project, Borwick’s “Sisters” and “The Electric Kool-Aid Immersion” had not been professionally recorded and were available only as live performances on YouTube.⁵ Premieres of *Appalachian Songbook I & II* can also be located on YouTube.⁶ Frazelle’s “Groundhog” was professionally recorded in 2001, along with two other songs not listed above.⁷ Mine is the first professional recording to include this particular set, and the first to feature appropriate accentuation and regionalisms. It will help establish a performance practice for art songs of the American South. This practice is not limited only to contemporary works, but can also be applied to well-known, Southern-inspired works by such important composers as Stephen Foster, Aaron Copland, and John Jacob Niles.

The remainder of this project falls into three sections: investigation into the existence or practice of Southern dialect in vocal music, phonetic interpretations of the Southern accent when sung, and a performer’s guide to the aforementioned recorded

⁴ Doug Borwick, *Southern Comfort: A Cycle of Songs for Medium High Voice and Piano*, Poetry by Emily H. Wilson, Mt. Morris, N.Y. Leyerle Publications, 1989.

⁵ “Doug Borwick - Southern Comfort - Sisters and The Electric Kool-Aid Immersion,” YouTube video, from a performance by Barbara DeMaio Caprilli and Lynette Wahlstrom on October 1, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgKi9uzYFJI>.

⁶ “Appalachian Songbook I by Kenneth Frazelle,” YouTube video, posted by “Kenneth Frazelle,” June 25, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XfgJgYNOfg&t=69s>.

“Appalachian Songbook II by Kenneth Frazelle,” YouTube video, posted by “Kenneth Frazelle,” September 10, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0CRsATQVbo>.

⁷ Marilyn Taylor on *Return: Art Songs of Carolina*. Albany Records. 2001. This recording only included three songs from Frazelle’s *Appalachian Songbooks*; “Groundhog,” “Naomi Wise,” and “Bonnie Blue Eyes.

selections, based on composers' notes, settings, and instructions on the music. I transcribed the textual results of my linguistic research using the International Phonetic Alphabet (Appendix A), which will be indicated by brackets in both the text of this document and in the appendixes. Additionally, italics will be utilized for words referenced from song and literary texts. My end product will provide fellow singers, especially those less familiar with southern spoken idioms, with tools necessary to perform these and similar art songs with their differentiated regional accents and to promote these art songs most effectively in the classical vocal community.

Regional Southern Accents in the Classical Vocal Arts: Opera

Since its beginning, the European opera tradition has represented regionally and socially specific dialects. This can be seen in the many Tuscan and Neapolitan accents in 18th-century Italy,⁸ Rameau's vernacular Languedoc in *Daphnis et Alcimadure* (1754),⁹ Schweizerdeutsch to Hochdeutsch as codes for social classes in dramatic libretti, or the late-nineteenth-century practice of generalizing comedic plotlines with transcribed Plattdeutsch dialect.¹⁰ Historically, European operas utilized region-specific dialects for different settings and characters; likewise, American opera is beginning to embrace the same standards, exploring more authenticity in its interpretation. In recent decades, southern states, predominantly those east of the Mississippi River and south of Virginia, have become the backdrop for many musically staged productions. Marc Blitzstein's *Regina* (1948), Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* (1954), and Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (2000) are set in this region and each spans a time frame of about a decade. While a growing number of operas are being set in the South today, these three works are already established in the opera repertoire.

Blitzstein's *Regina*, based on Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* (1939), takes place in Alabama in 1900 and was one of the first operas to feature a Southern locale. Though many recognize this work as an opera, *Regina*'s genre was debated for some time due to

⁸ Daniel Hertz, "Piccini," in *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720-1780*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2003.

⁹ George Hogarth, *Memoirs of the Opera in Italy, France, Germany, and England, England*, Volume 2, United Kingdom: London 1851, Hathi Trust Digital Library, Accessed January 6, 2017. 215-216.

¹⁰ Charles Kendall Adams, "Plattdeutsch," in *Johnson's Universal Cyclopædia: A New Edition*, Volume 6, 1899, 651.

Blitzstein's previous work, which combined elements of opera, stage play, and musical theatre.¹¹ *Regina*'s classification was further muddled due to constant re-writing and editing by Blitzstein himself.¹² Regardless of the classification, the performers were able to explore qualities of *Regina*'s characters by using elements of regional Southern accents, as is evident in past recordings and documented performance practice. In the 1958 recording, the performers sang and delivered lines in a casual Southern accent, with variance depending on a character's race and social status.¹³ Uncharacteristically for spoken practice, final consonants are clearly articulated. Many vowels are elongated with the addition of diphthongs. Furthermore, "-ing" endings are often interpreted as [ɪn]. Blitzstein's libretto, however, is written in proper English, except for the occasional "ain't" or nonstandard syntax: "Oh, what a very long time it is since I've been remembering how music is for me."¹⁴

In a 1949 *New York Times* article on the premiere, Leonard Bernstein comments on the juxtaposition of the work's musical sophistication with its colloquial libretto. "[T]he music reeks with magnolia, Southern gentility, splendid hospitality, [and] honeyed drawls."¹⁵ Bernstein also mentions Blitzstein's use of numerous musical genres to suit

¹¹ Anne Bill Foradori, "Mark Blitzstein's 'Regina': A Pivotal Work in American Musical Theatre." (DMA Diss., The Ohio State University, 1994).

¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³ Marc Blitzstein, *Regina*, New York City Opera Company, Julius Rudel with Brenda Lewis, Elisabeth Carron, Carol Brice, and Joshua Hecht, Recorded April 28, 1958, Sony 72912, 2010, 2 compact discs.

¹⁴ Marc Blitzstein, *Regina*, piano vocal score granted by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, (New York: Tams-Witmark, 1991) 17.

¹⁵ Leonard Bernstein, "Prelude to an Opening", *Regina*, New York City Opera dir. Julius Rudel, Recorded April 28, 1958, Sony 72912, 2010 compact disc, liner notes. 10.

specific needs of each character. Everything from spirituals, ragtime music of New Orleans bands, “straight jazz, quasi-symphonic music, Mozartean recitative, romantic recitative, ballads, comic songs of a burlesque-show nature, operatic arias and ensembles” appear in Blitzstein’s stage works.¹⁶ Despite the inclusion of unrelated music genres, longer-than-usual dialogue, and vernacular writing, Blitzstein aimed at an authentic American atmosphere for the stage in this operatic adaptation of *The Little Foxes*. About *Regina*, Copland writes, “He was the first American composer to invent a vernacular musical idiom that sounded convincing when heard from the lips of the man-in-the-street, [including the smaller roles of taxi driver, panhandler, and corner druggist].”¹⁷ Though this statement may be true regarding frequently performed, popular operas like *Regina*, other composers gave strong voice to everyday characters long before Blitzstein. Scott Joplin’s *Treemonisha* (1911), Harry Lawrence Freeman’s *Voodoo* (1928), and W. Frank Harling’s *Deep River* (1926) all contain cultural themes, vernacular pronunciations, and music pertinent to southern, and especially African American life. Nevertheless, Blitzstein’s highly visible *Regina* preserved the integrity of Hellman’s Southern bourgeois characters and pushed the boundaries of opera, “result[ing] in a contribution to American music that [has] yet to be fully evaluated.”¹⁸

Years after *Regina*, a dramatic opera surfaced that has since become one of the most successful in the United States. Premiering in 1954, Carlisle Floyd’s *Susannah* is set in the Appalachian Mountains of rural Tennessee. Perhaps not surprisingly, the

¹⁶ Ibid, 10, 11.

¹⁷ Aaron Copland, quoted in Leonard Lehrman, *Marc Blitzstein: A Bio-Bibliography*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005, 126.

¹⁸ Ibid.

“authenticity of its highly colloquial text [and the] folkloric stylings of its score” have yielded a performance practice exemplified by wildly varying degrees of Southern accent.¹⁹

The Appalachian dialect of *Susannah*'s libretto features the substitution of open vowels for pure vowels, truncated words, and narrowing the ends of central vowels within words to incorporate diphthongs. In a fashion similar to that of Oscar Hammerstein's libretto for *Oklahoma!* (1943), “fer” is written in place of *for*, “jes” in place of *just*, and “cain't” for *can't*, to name only a few.²⁰ Other rural Southern phrases appear throughout the score, represented by nonstandard grammar and misspellings: “The crick must be plum' spoilt now with all them people bein' baptized” and “I seed the preacher at the store yesterday.”²¹ Though Floyd indicated very specific pronunciations, recorded and live pronunciations vary in practice.

In the 1962 live recording, Phyllis Curtin and Norman Treigle frequently sing in accents, specifically when the dialect is written in the score.²² Words like *just* (printed as “jes”) and *of* (printed as “o”) are pronounced as written in the libretto. Yet, some words and vowels not specifically indicated by the composer are sung with standard English pronunciation. For example, the [aɪ] diphthong in “light” and “like” are performed in classical style, with both vowel sounds enunciated. In the Appalachian dialect, the [aɪ]

¹⁹ Jonathan Abarbanel, *Carlisle Floyd's Susannah*. CD booklet, 8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 50, 92, & 52. Lynn Riggs set *Green Grow the Lilacs* in the Indian Territory of the year 1900, while Rodgers and Hammerstein set their musical adaptation after Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

²² Carlisle Floyd, *Susannah*, New Orleans Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Phyllis Curtin and Norman Treigle, Recorded Live 1962, VAI Audio, 1995.

diphthong would sound as one single phoneme, [a]. Nevertheless, this performance of *Susannah* delivers the regional Southern accent well when the lines are spoken or sung in the mid-voice range. The dialect is sometimes sacrificed when the musical numbers demand a higher tessitura, amplified dynamics, or increased rhythmic syllabification.

In the 1994 recording, soprano Cheryl Studer and bass Samuel Ramey sing with a much more pronounced drawl, longer duration of the American [r], slurs, scoops, and significantly more nasal, twangy resonance.²³ Whereas the 1962 cast generally used regional Southern accents for words specified in the libretto, the singers in the 1994 recording rendered the natural speech patterns of Appalachian dialect in each word. What would typically be sung in a generic accent as *danced* or *step* is performed by Studer as [der əntst] and [ˈster əp].²⁴ Out of context, the pronunciations of Studer, Ramey, and their colleagues are jarring at first. When listening to the whole work, however, these moments more consistently give insight into the characters' rural, unpolished origins.

Regardless of the composer's indications for dialect in the score, the performer must interpret the libretto as an extension of character. Diction coach Kathryn LaBouff encourages singers to use regional dialects authentically, when applicable. "Singing in regional dialects is a wonderful and worthwhile challenge. It can help establish a character or a locale as much as the technical aspects of the production can."²⁵ She

²³ Carlisle Floyd, *Susannah*, Opera de Lyon, Cheryl Studer and Samuel Ramey, Recorded in 1993, Released by Virgin Classics Limited, 1994.

²⁴ Ibid. One of the more identifiably Appalachian spoken traits is the use of added diphthongs. Specifically, in this case the diphthong is created by squeezing, or narrowing the end of the open vowel.

²⁵ Kathryn LaBouff, *Singing and Communicating in English : A Singer's Guide to English Diction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, Print. 265.

continues to explain that, since *Susannah* is set in Appalachia, a dialect from that region should be used.

Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, set in Louisiana, requires several different dialects: Northern Louisiana, Southern-most Louisiana including Creole, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and others belonging to the Gulf region.²⁶ In addition to these, the composer also employs different musical genres to best reflect the characters at hand. Heggie stresses the importance of singing with natural nuances of the language while adopting jazz, opera, rock, art song, even pop musical styles.²⁷ Though the score of *Dead Man Walking* does not indicate specifically Southern articulations, numerous colorful "Southernisms"—methods of expression—appear. Examples include Joseph's lines "nights like that's what makes the rest of this ugly old planet tol'rable,"²⁸ and "all I'm gonna say is: Do what you gotta do. But if, ya'll think killin' is so bad, look at what you're doin'."²⁹ Other examples include incorrect grammar such as Joseph's Mother's declaration, "I don't read so good."³⁰

Performance practice of *Dead Man Walking* stays aligned with its setting. In both the live recording of the premiere in 2000, and in the edited version in 2001, the casts employ appropriate accents ranging from Joseph's thick, rural drawl to the lightly drawled, well-mannered utterances of Sister Helen Prejean, who hails from Baton Rouge.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kendra Allyn Lynch, "A Comparative Analysis of Four Pieces by Jake Heggie" (M.M. report, California State University, Long Beach, 2006) 63.

²⁸ Jake Heggie, *Dead Man Walking*, Libretto by Terrence McNally, New York: Bent Pen Music, 2000. 119-120.

²⁹ Ibid., 234.

³⁰ Ibid., 131.

Similar to the 1962 recording of *Susannah*, recordings of Heggie's opera involve a moderate to high level of regional Southern accent. Again, the amount of dialectic corruption of pure vowels depends on the tessitura of the part and the character's origin. The result is an authentic delivery of the Deep Southern setting of *Dead Man Walking*.

Recorded performance practice of *Regina*, *Susannah*, and *Dead Man Walking* give substantial indications of moderate to extensive Southern accents. Printed words and colloquial syntax in the libretto may provide specific dialect instructions; yet actual pronunciation differs between artists. Regional Southern accents in operatic performance are becoming more common, yet this practice for the American musical theater stage, the subject of Chapter 2, has long been prominent.

Regional Southern Accents in the Classical Vocal Arts: The Theatre Stage

From its early influences of minstrelsy, light opera, vaudeville, musical plays, and others, American musical theatre featured accents and colloquialisms. Musically staged acts exhibited pseudo-Southern and actual Southern dialects long before free-standing book musicals, like *Show Boat* (1927), and in the songs of Stephen Foster, Thomas Baker, and John Stromberg.³¹ Themed shows like *We-uns of Tennessee*³² (1899), *The Southerners* (1904), *Bombo* (1921), and *Dixie to Broadway*³³ (1924) made their marks on mass New York audiences, in part for their rural ambiance. Problems surrounding their musical impact, however, include the “down home” charm of white nostalgia—often at the expense of African American exploitation, stage critics’ aversion to dialect, and the inconsistency of perceived “authenticity.” Recycled minstrel songs reappeared often in early American musical theatre, but were so permeated with white appropriations of African American dialect that it is hard to decipher whether any of the written linguistics belonged to original minstrels, the Southeast region as a whole, or the blackface reinterpretations of black minstrelsy.

Actors using regional Southern dialect in theatres was evident at the beginning of the 1800’s. From the famous American actor family, Euphemia Jefferson was criticized

³¹ Though hailing from Canada, John Stromberg was famous for his settings of “coon songs” including titles like “Ma Blushin’ Rosie,” “What! Marry Dat Gal,” and “Come Down Ma Evenin’ Star.”

³² A.S. Seer Print and Lee Arthur, *We-uns of Tennessee by Lee Arthur*, New York: A.S. Seer Print, 1899, Image Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014636562/>.

³³ Cary D. Wintz, and Paul Finkelman, *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance: K-Y*, New York: Routledge, 2004, Print, 799. *Dixie to Broadway* was the first major Broadway show comprised exclusively of black performers. However, the scenes and musical numbers glorified antebellum Southern life, often carrying racist themes.

for her “pronunciation of *man* as *mai-an*.”³⁴ The continued distaste for anything less than perfect pronunciation is discussed in Susan L. Porter’s chapter, “Acting Traditions” referring to issues actors faced when striving to mask their personal accents to perform in a contrasting dialect. Porter cites one critic’s view of *The Mountaineers* (1909): “one of them would willingly be thought an *Irishman* [...] but I was not to be duped in that way; I could have sworn the *blockhead* had been born in Kentucky.”³⁵ Though these critiques are centuries old, they prove that the aim to purify dialects continued well past the 19th century. Non-standard accents were generally limited to low comedy roles, often representing African American, Irish, Jewish, and various “Others.” Regional accents even appeared in Victor Herbert’s theatrical operettas as “coon songs” and Southern references.³⁶

Tides began to turn in the early years of the 20th century, when frequent literary representations of regional Southern accent emerged. Practices for creating authentic Southern dialect via literature ranged widely from the styles of Mark Twain, Flannery O’Connor, and William Faulkner. The process of transcribing non-standard speech into literary works preceded authors of the Southern Renaissance (1929-1955), and is

³⁴ Susan L. Porter, *With an Air Debonair: Musical Theatre in America 1785-1815*, Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, Print, 280.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 279.

³⁶ Victor Herbert’s *The Idol’s Eye* (1897) includes “Talk About Yo’ Luck.” Likewise, “Coon Banshee” can be found in *It Happened in Nordland* (1909).

“Coon Song” defined by Oxford Music Online:

A genre of American comic song, popular from about 1880 to the end of World War I, with words in a dialect purporting to be typical of black Americans’ speech. Coon songs explored every conceivable black characteristic and were written by black as well as white composers. Entertainments were developed from the coon song, and [they] found their way into legitimate theatrical productions as unrelated interpolations.

exemplified in the dialect poetry and stories of James Weldon Johnson, Charles W. Chesnutt, and humorist George Washington Harris. The aforementioned authors were not the first to give literary representations of non-standard dialect; however, their writings were among the first to give more authenticity to rural white Southern speech. Acknowledging that the Southern accent is not parallel from state to state, nor has it remained unchanged throughout the decades, unifying traits of southern region in literature exhibit [r] coloring, relaxed vowels, and dropped consonants. This demonstrates that the white Southern accent was present in speech if not in quotations or lyrics.

Dialect writing in maximal amount occurs with George Washington Harris's character, Sut Lovingood. Harris's *Yarns Spun by a "Nat'ral Born Durn'd Fool"* (1867) features Sut's adventures and antics in the rural Southern backwoods. "[H]ighlight[ing] the dialect and customs of the people living in the mountains of eastern Tennessee...[T]he stories comment on humankind's essential baseness while emphasizing the ignorance of city folk who misguidedly fashion themselves as superior to rural Tennesseans in intellect, manner, and morals."³⁷ Likely drawing from his experience living in Knoxville, Harris explores an abundance of literary transcriptions of the rural Appalachian dialect for this comedic caricature:

“Gewhillitins! how he run: when he cum tu bushes, he'd clar the top ove em wif a squeal, gopher an' all...Every now an' then he'd fan the side ove his hed, fust wif wun fore laig an' then tuther, then he'd gin hissef a roun-handed slap what soundid like a waggin whip ontu the place whar the breechbands tetches a hoss, a-runnin all the time an' a-kerrin that ar gopher jis 'bout as fas' an' es hi frum the

³⁷ Bond Thompson. “Summary of Sut Lovingood. *Yarns Spun by a "Nat'ral Born Durn'd Fool."* Warped and Wove for Public Wear. By George Washington Harris.” Documenting the American South, 2004, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/harrisg/summary.html>.

yeath es ever eny gopher wer kerried I'll swar.³⁸

While this written dialect is difficult to decipher, Twain, Faulkner, and O'Connor outwardly enjoyed Harris's "folk humor."³⁹ Dialects are apparent throughout Faulkner's novels, though in a more legible approach. Cash, a character in *As I Lay Dying*, ponders the relativity of the social norm when reflecting on his brother becoming institutionalized: "Sometimes I think it aint [sic] none of us pure crazy and aint none of us pure sane until the balance of us talks him that-a-way. It's like it aint so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it."⁴⁰ Though these examples are vastly different, both aim to provide region-specific Southern accents to the reader, whether one is familiar with the Southeastern states or far removed from them.

Rising popularity of America-born literature in addition to the increasing demand for staged musicals helped forge the way for Southern-themed productions like *Show Boat* (1927) and *Porgy and Bess* (1934). Due to a myriad of social and racial factors, the techniques for transcribing dialects in *Show Boat* in its original libretto were not displayed by all characters. As was common practice of the early 1900s, the libretto indicates slang and heavy dialect for African American characters in the show, but rarely for Caucasians or characters of bi-racial lineage. In Edna Ferber's 1926 novel, white characters are provided more regional Southern speech characteristics. Ferber writes text

³⁸ George Washington Harris, *Yarns Spun by a "Nat'ral Born Durn'd Fool."* *Warped and Wove for Public Wear*, New York: Dick & Fitzgerald Publishers, 1867, Electronic Edition, UNC Chapel Hill, 1997. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/harrisg/gharris.html>, 24.

³⁹ Milton Rickels, "George Washington Harris, 1814-1869," Documenting the American South, 1989, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/harrisg/bio.html>.

⁴⁰ William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, NY: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith Inc., 1930.

truncations, “you cer’nly sing like one,” “where’d I been” or non-standard grammar, “God, they was a million babies to-night... They sure took you seriously and brought ‘em, all right.”⁴¹ Though Kern’s adaptation includes incorrect grammar, double negatives, and truncated [n]’s for both white and black characters, his interpretation of African American dialect is far more detailed.⁴²

Julie, leading lady of the show boat, sings “Dere ain’t no reason, why I should love dat man. It must be sumpin’ dat de angels done plan.”⁴³ It is strange for her to know this type of song since, as Queenie mentions, “ah didn’t ever hear anybody but coloured folks sing dat song—Sounds funny for Miss Julie to know it.”⁴⁴ Later it is discovered that Julie passed for white, but her mother was African American, and her father white. There are sparse examples in musical numbers in which a regional Southern accent can be assumed for white characters as well; one such case appears in Captain Andy’s musical number, “Bally-Hoo.” Upon his first vocal entrance, he exclaims, “Look it we got! . . . You never seen a show like this before!”⁴⁵ His grammar and shortened word endings, written “n’,” suggest the performer use at least a mild accent. Other examples include Ellie’s use of “ain’t,” “feller,” and the multiple negative, “I won’t never marry no actor.”⁴⁶

Recorded performance practice exhibits some of the libretto’s written Southern

⁴¹ Edna Ferber, *Show Boat*, New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1926.

⁴² Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, *Show Boat*, Libretto, T.B. Harms Co. Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 1934. *This practice is seen in *Regina*, with distinction of dialect for the African American roles of Addie and Cal.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁵ Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, *Show Boat*, Vocal Score, T.B. Harms Co. Rockefeller Center, New York, NY, 1934, 32.

⁴⁶ Kern & Hammerstien, Libretto, 25.

dialect when white characters are portrayed. Parthy, played by Helen Westley, exhibited a mild Southern dialect in the 1936 motion picture adaptation of the musical, elongating ending vowel sounds into drawls, such as *morning* as “maw-nin.”⁴⁷ Performed by Colette Lyons, Ellie’s number, “Life Upon the Wicked Stage,” was included in the 1946 Broadway Revival Cast recording. On this album, this song is approached as a ‘character piece’ and sung with a generally nasal tone, chewed vowels (i.e., inserted diphthongs), and the [I] substitution for [ɛ].⁴⁸

Two decades later, the 1966 Lincoln Center Theatre Cast recorded Allyn Ann McLerie singing the same role. McLerie exhibits a fair amount of regional Southern dialect such as diphthongs and ending ‘r’ coloring (*ever* pronounced “e-verrr”), exemplified by *ever*, “ain’t nothin’ for a girl,” and when she narrows the ends of [e] vowels to form the more closed [ei], as in “reputation.”⁴⁹ Yet, she upholds more widely accepted singing technique, and predominantly standard diction with pure vowels. McLerie approaches the line “does he like the way I lure” by using a high-English diphthong ‘y’ preceding the ‘u;’ thus, sounding [ljur], yet continues to elongate the final ‘r.’⁵⁰

The tendency to associate regional accents with “character roles” continued into other musicals throughout the twentieth century. Additionally, a genericized, regional

⁴⁷ Carl Laemmle. *Edna Ferber’s Show Boat*, Universal Pictures, 1936, Accessed via <https://vimeo.com/>.

⁴⁸ Colette Lyons, *Show Boat*, 1946. Sony Classical Records, Naxos Music Library 884977902358.

⁴⁹ Jerome Kern, *Show Boat*, Lincoln Center Theater Cast, RCA Records, 1966, Released in 1992. Naxos Music Library 090266118229.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Southern accent appeared for any rural American setting. *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), and *Paint Your Wagon* (1951) despite their California or Mid-Western settings, have trained audiences to expect “character voices” with drawls, slurs, and clipped word endings typical of the American South. The rural accents of Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!*, and the Ohio and Minnesota settings of *Annie Get Your Gun* exhibit sounds similar to the Southern accent, due to the influence by early migrants from the southern and eastern United States. However, the literary treatment of these vastly different dialects is approached in the same manner, with little regard to regional distinctions.

Popular shows taking place in the southeastern United States include *Finian’s Rainbow* (1947), *Big River* (1985), *Floyd Collins* (1996), *Parade* (1998), *Waitress* (2015), among others. Based on Mark Twain’s novel, the musical *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was written in 1985 by Roger Miller (1936-1992), and includes regional Southern dialects from Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Premiering in a time when American musical theatre aficionados mostly favored glamour and wealth, an olden-times musical featuring guitar, harmonica, and fiddle onstage seemed an unlikely candidate for success. Hurwitz writes of this era that “[h]yping, packaging, merchandising and promoting a show before it was open, or even written, established musicals as a product to be sold in international franchises...[B]ut the hype was what defined the musical theatre of the 1980s.”⁵¹ Despite a predilection for spectacle in shows such as *Cats* (1981) and *Starlight Express* (1984), musicals from the 1984-1985

⁵¹ Nathan Hurwitz, *A History of the American Musical Theatre: No Business Like It*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2014, 211.

Broadway season left little impression; as Chicago Tribune critic Richard Christiansen wrote, “*Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is Broadway’s last-minute hero...to rescue a season that had been desperate for decent musicals.”⁵² *Big River* was nominated for ten Tony awards, and received seven, in part for its “superbly designed and executed physical production.”⁵³

Roger Miller, a country music star, wrote the musical numbers that are rich with Southern dialect. In the first number titled “Do Ya Wanna Go to Heaven?,” Miss Watson’s accent is immediately on display:

Looka here, Huck do ya wanna go to heaven
Well, I’ll tell you right now
You better learn your writin’
Or you’ll never get to heaven
‘Cause you won’t know how⁵⁴

In the soundtrack from the 1985 original Broadway cast, this number is introduced by Evelyn Baron, who exhibits moderate Southern accent. Though she clips n’s, glottalizes t’s in intervocalic settings, and substitutes [a] for the diphthong [aɪ], Baron clearly articulates her initial t’s, and ignores the libretto’s *wanna* by separating the truncation into proper English as “want to.”⁵⁵

Though much of the libretto is taken directly from Twain’s novel, Miller employs dialect in songs for white and black characters equally. History has prepared the reader to

⁵² Richard Christiansen. “Broadway’s ‘Big River’ A Season-Saving Musical,” *Chicago Tribune (Pre-1997 Fulltext)*, May 03, 1985. <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Roger Miller, *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Libretto, Long Island City, NY: Rodgers & Hammerstein Library Annex, 1985, 3.

⁵⁵ Roger Miller, *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1985 Original Broadway Cast Recording, UMG Recordings, Inc., January 1, 1985.

expect word truncation, incorrect grammar, and misspellings in slave songs. Miller’s treatment of the slave song in “The Crossing” exhibits hardly any such dialect.

We are pilgrims on a journey	I will worry ‘bout tomorrow
Through the darkness of the night	When tomorrow comes in sight
We are bound for other places	Until then, I’m just a pilgrim
Crossing to the other side	Crossing to the other side ⁵⁶

Save the word *about*, Miller does not indicate how the words should be pronounced. In this case, Miller permits the dialect be interpreted at the performers’ discretion. In the 1985 musical soundtrack, Carol Dennis interpolates several authentic-sounding changes into “The Crossing.” She adds the word “Lord”—familiar from traditional spirituals—following the punctuation in “Until then, I’m just a pilgrim.” Dialect choices include squeezing the [I] vowel to become [i] in *until* and *pilgrim*; adding “a-” between words, i.e., *his a-hand*; and dropping consonants like “t” in *just a pilgrim*.⁵⁷ The utilization of African American dialect for this scene not only creates contrast between featured social groups, but provides the listener with differentiations of this dialect from the generic, rural Southern accent.

In a 1985 Tony Awards performance featuring Daniel Jenkins and Ron Richardson, regional Missouri dialect is heard equally from Huck, the white character, and Jim, his black friend. Singing “Muddy Water,” both performers spread their vowels, replace *wata* for *water*, and the substitution of the voiced ‘d’ for ‘t,’ exemplified in the line “got a need” which is rendered in the slang version, “gada need.”⁵⁸ Similarly, words *wide* and

⁵⁶ Miller, *Big River*, Libretto, 46-47.

⁵⁷ 1985 Original Broadway Cast Recording, “The Crossing.”

⁵⁸ “Big River 1985 Tony Awards,” Youtube video from a performance by the cast of *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* on June 2, 1985, uploaded by “MrPoochsmooch,” July 19, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTTG8beemxQ>.

ride, have no diphthong, but an elongated [a] vowel. Following “Muddy Water,” Jenkins begins one of the most popular songs of the show, “River in the Rain,” which later became a standard in Roger Miller’s repertoire.⁵⁹ Jenkins’s interpretation features drawls, vowels, and twang resonance similar to Roger Miller’s accent which stems from Erick, Oklahoma: interesting considering Huck’s character is from northern Missouri.

In a later musical number, Jim and Huck pick up two characters from Kentucky, Duke and King. “When the Sun Goes Down in the South” exhibits a different flavor of accent. In this case, Duke and King sing with much more [ɹ] elongation and diphthongs: they close to the [ɹ] that is placed in the back of the mouth in *darkness* and sing [‘i ə] in place of [ɪ] for words like *when*.⁶⁰ Though the libretto makes no distinction in its literary approach to suggest these different accents, the performers in *Big River* must make a conscious decision as to their character’s voice. Under the direction of dialect coach Tim Monich, the original cast of *Big River* succeeded in incorporating region-specific accents for its many scenes along the Mississippi River.⁶¹

In 1996, a musical by Adam Guettel and Tina Landau featured highly specified rural Southern linguistics, bluegrass instrumentation, and yodeling. Set in 1925 in Barren County, Kentucky, *Floyd Collins* is a musical adaptation of the famous coal miner’s life during the cave exploration craze, which led to his ultimately death. Though reactions to

⁵⁹ Brian Carpenter, “Dashboard Poet: Roger Miller,” *Southern Cultures* 20, No. 4: 116-131, 2014, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost, Accessed February 15, 2017.

⁶⁰ “When the Sun Goes Down in the South,” *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1985 Original Broadway Cast Recording.

⁶¹ “Production Staff,” *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, The Broadway League Inc., *The Internet Broadway Database*, 2001, <https://www.ibdb.com>.

Guettel's score was often praised for its musical innovation, Landau's book and poetic direction received sharp criticisms:

[T]he play proves overrated. Guettel's eclectic score is challenging and artful, but Landau's book fails to parlay the intriguing tale into a cohesive dramatic piece... The score, which encompasses bluegrass, folk, opera, and even yodeling, for the most part does a better job of integrating the characters' joyous and sorrowful moods.⁶²

Despite challenges with the "strained and incomplete" plot, the music and libretto provide more depth of character.⁶³ Literary representations truncate words and give vowel pronunciations similar to that in *Susannah*: "You jes' a wee bit slow in the head, jes like you always was a wee bit slow."⁶⁴ The vowel change for [ɛ] in place of [ʌ] in words like *just*, occurs in likewise situations for the word *get*. The musical's opening number, "Ballad of Floyd Collins" specifies numerous Appalachian nuances: "Deep in the land of the hollows an' creeks, if'n you git lost you git lost for weeks."⁶⁵

Musical stylings evoking the Appalachian folk include pitch bending and yodeling. Guettel writes upward slurs at the ends of words *man* and *brave*, which could be interpreted as a technique from the contemporary pop/musical theatre genre. The original cast recording, however, uses the upward slurs in the process of elongating diphthongs, an authentic trait from Kentuckian music stylings. What would be pronounced *man* is sung [ˈmeɪ jən] having the secondary stressed syllable on the ascending major second

⁶² Les Spindle, "Floyd Collins," *Back Stage West* 12, No. 8 (February 17, 2005): 23. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text, EBSCOhost (accessed February 16, 2017).

⁶³ David A. Rosenberg, "Reviews," *Back Stage* 37, no. 11, March 15, 1996: 60, International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance, Accessed via EBSCOhost, February 20, 2017.

⁶⁴ Adam Guettel, Tina Landau, et al, *Floyd Collins*, Music Score, United States Milwaukee, WI: Williamson Music Exclusively distributed by Hal Leonard Corp, 2001. p117.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

pitch. Likewise, and more pronounced, is *brave*—[‘brɛ iv].⁶⁶ In the next number, Floyd, performed by Christopher Innvar, sings “The Cave Canon” in which he must yodel. Similar to the notation in *The Sound of Music*’s “The Lonely Goatherd,” Guettel specifies vowel changes of “oh” and “ee.” Yet, drastically different is his approach to the voice break, notated as an ascending ghost note sliding back down to the original pitch.⁶⁷ Highlighting the voice break of the yodel, this gesture is repeated numerous times, and with the aid of audio looping, improvised upon.

The libretto differentiates among dialects of characters from Barren County and the reporters from other cities. Opening the second act, city reporters comment on the scene in overlapping chatter. Guettel earmarks the reporters’ music by setting them in barbershop style, sung with clear diction, and without colloquialisms. Though there is no written indication of dialect, the recording features a nasalized, Mid-Atlantic English that one would expect to hear in the 1920s (accents similar to Spencer Tracy and William Powell), thus starkly contrasting these city reporters from the Kentucky locals. One character, however, is given mild Southern linguistic patterns which change depending on with whom he converses.

Character Skeets Miller, a reporter for the Louisville Courier-Journal is given sparse written dialect, and then only present when he is off-record or under high emotional stress. Specifying “n” for most words ending in “-ing,” and the truncation of “gotta” for *got to* occur as non-standard dialect in Miller’s “I Landed on Him” and in

⁶⁶ *Floyd Collins*, Original Broadway Cast Recording, Nonesuch Records, 1997.

⁶⁷ *Floyd Collins*, Music Score, 30.

later dialogue with Floyd's sister, Nellie.⁶⁸ However, when Miller is reporting, he uses only standard grammar and proper syntax. Original cast member Martin Moran performs Miller's lines with a very slight accent, upholding clarity of vowels in standard English pronunciation, yet allowing some clipped consonants for the "-ing" words. Perhaps this distinction of dialect is given to Miller because he is from the city, but is in closer proximity to Barren County than the other reporters. Nevertheless, *Floyd Collins* exhibits a multitude of accent variations, whether belonging to rural or urban Kentucky, or to the popular radio cities of the 1920's like Chicago and New York. These performance differentiations as discussed in *Floyd Collins*, *Big River*, and *Show Boat* exhibit distinction among accents to better exhibit authenticity of their characters.

In summation, American music theatre, just as its operatic counterpart, increasingly accepted appropriate use of regional accents from the time of 1927 *Showboat* onward. Due to the varying performance practices of songs from early American variety shows and light opera, it is unclear if regional Southern dialect at the turn of the twentieth century represented the rural habitants of the Southeast, or some corrupted version of African American singing from the minstrel stage. This problem is exemplified in the musical stylings of Collins & Harlan, whose accents aim for African American dialect, yet sound like an integration of that and a genericized, rural Southern accent. Other problems of the American theatre stage, including a long-lived, and perhaps snobbish preference for pure diction, existed long before the premiere of *Show Boat*. However,

⁶⁸ Ibid., No. 9, "I Landed on Him" exhibits no indicated vowel changes to reflect Southern accent and includes finalized consonants for words "something" and "chattering." However, his mild accent is present in Miller's line, "moanin', thirstin', groanin', or yelpin' like croakin'."

pivotal authors before and during the literary Southern Renaissance provided numerous representations of regional Southern accents. Nineteenth-century novels by George Washington Harris and Mark Twain, and their twentieth-century counterparts, by Flannery O'Connor and William Faulkner, offered authentic depictions of Southern life and its sounds, and paved the way for future librettos. The good effects of such literature continue to be seen in the ways Southern accents have become standard in characterizations for musicals *Big River*, *Floyd Collins*, and even Sara Bareilles's 2015 musical version of the 2007 film, *Waitress*. Though regionally appropriate accents are appreciated in opera and musical performances, the recital stage is far less accepting of such Southernisms.

Regional Southern Accents in the Classical Vocal Arts: Contemporary Art Song

Like American Musical Theatre, American Art Song developed from roots in many genres, including traditional folk tunes, spirituals, European songs, and hymns. Early examples, called parlor songs, include “Beautiful Dreamer” and “My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night” from the *Stephen Foster Song Book*, as well as H.T. Burleigh’s versions of the traditional “Deep River” and “Balm in Gilead” from his *Arrangements of Spirituals*. Notated music continued to include dialect into the twentieth century, and recorded performance practice ranged from exaggerated Southern dialect to highly formalized British accents. Though most composers have since removed antiquated practices of dialect writing in welcome acknowledgement of racist and other negative connotations embedded in traditional depictions of dialect, struggles with authenticity continue. Additionally, the majority of nineteenth and twentieth-century American art song was to be sung in standard English. The evolution of American art song, however, experienced issues with printed dialects, inconsistent performance practice, and complications regarding origin, influence, and style.

H.T. Burleigh’s art songs were recognizably saturated with accents and musical styles common in African American worship. Acknowledging the fact that both white and black singers would be performing his songs, Burleigh made specifications to perform them seriously and with “deep spiritual feeling.”⁶⁹ Regarding the singing style of

⁶⁹ H. T. Burleigh, *The Celebrated Negro Spirituals*, Album no. 1, London: G. Ricordi & Co., Music Score, 1917, Foreword written by Burleigh indicates: “It is a serious misconception of their meaning and value to treat them as ‘minstrel’ songs, or to try to make them funny by a too literal attempt to imitate the manner of the Negro in singing them, by swaying the body, clapping the hands, or striving to make the peculiar inflections of the voice that are natural with the colored people.”

such hymns, William T. Dargan writes about “style synthesis,” a phenomenon that ultimately resulted in the amalgam of style from English hymns and African music and worship between 1750 and 1850.”⁷⁰

In a 1916 recording of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” and Burleigh’s “I Don’t Feel No-Ways Tired,” soprano Kitty Cheatham exhibits melismas, rhythmic accents, and dialect derived from black congregational singing. It is significant that this Nashville-born white soprano and actress was hailed in her time as a master of voice. Reviews from a 1917 performance at Carnegie Hall praised her abilities when singing Grieg, Mozart, and Chopin, and her negro songs “which she alone can present with fidelity.”⁷¹ Specifically mentioned in this review, “‘Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,’ which nobody can sing as she can, was a triumph.”⁷² Cheatham uses spread vowels for diphthong [aɪ] for words like *I’m* and *tried*, sings slowly through nonstandard spellings words like “Lawd,” and substitutes “d”’s for t’s singing the word *water* as “wada.”⁷³ Though she sings with dialect for lines like, “I ain’t gwine stay here no longer,” Cheatham flips intervocalic r’s, and trills the ‘r’ in *pray*. In Burleigh’s publication of “Swing Low,” there is no written dialect, clipped word endings, or vowel substitutions. “I Don’t Feel No-Ways Tired” includes shortened ‘-ing’ endings, ‘d’ for ‘th’ as in the word *this*, and phrase “city into de

⁷⁰ William T. Dargan, “Texts from Lloyd’s Hymn Book in the Quiltwork of African American Singing Styles,” *Benjamin Lloyd’s Hymn Book: A Primitive Baptist Song Tradition*, Alabama Folklife Association, Montgomery, 1999.

⁷¹ “Kitty Cheatham: A Five Days’ Record,” *The Musical Monitor*, Vol 7. 1917. 202.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Kitty Cheatham, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” by H. T. Burleigh, Victor Records No. 45086, 1916. <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings>.

Hebben Hallelu.”⁷⁴ All of these specific indications are sung by Cheatham.

The practice of flipping and rolling r’s in Burleigh’s songs was also exhibited by Paul Robeson, who typically performed with clarity of finalized consonants including “r”, “d”, and “-ing,” and tall, round vowels of a non-regional accent.⁷⁵ Robeson’s rendition of Foster tune, “Old Folks at Home” includes singing the score-notated dialect for words “ribber,” “dere’s,” and “eb’rywhere.”⁷⁶ Apart from the printed dialect, Robeson employs pure vowels and crisp diction. Considering the phrase, “let me live and die” has no representation of dialect, Robeson makes crisp articulation for ending consonants “t” and “v” and proceeds to sing through diphthong [aɪ] in *die*. Though neither Foster nor Burleigh were from the South, early publications of their music including non-standard dialect suggests a racial derivative.

The dialect in Foster’s minstrel lyrics, often exaggerated in later editions and in imitations of his work by other songwriters, is limited in his authorized editions mostly to selectively substituting ‘d’ for ‘th’, ‘b’ for ‘v’ and ‘a’ for ‘e’ (‘whar’ instead of ‘where’); other vernacular touches not necessarily denoting race are either contractions or the adding of ‘a’ to the beginning of present participles of verbs. Foster abandoned these along with race-specific terms in the early 1850s...”⁷⁷

Recordings range from pronunciation similar to Robeson and Cheatham to the vastly different European interpretation. German-born contralto Ernestine Schumann-

⁷⁴ H. T. Burleigh, “I Don’t Feel No-Ways Tired,” *International Music Score Library Project*, NY: Ricordi & Co., 1917, <http://imslp.org/>.

⁷⁵ Paul Robeson, *Paul Robeson: The Complete EMI Sessions 1928-1939*, Warner Classics Records, Remastered in 2008. Robeson frequently flips ending r’s in “river” and intervocalic r’s in “Jericho”, as well singing through diphthongs as in “my,” “crucified,” and “way.”

⁷⁶ Stephen Collins Foster, “Old Folks at Home,” Notated Music, Retrieved from the Library of Congress, 1861, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000745/>.

⁷⁷ Deane L. Root, “Foster, Stephen C.,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10040>.

Heink recorded “Old Folks at Home” for Victor Records in 1918. This interpretation exhibits trilled “r”s on beginning, ending, and some intervocalic positions. Though she sings expressively through dialect words, her accent seems wildly out of place when pronouncing aspirate t’s in “matter” and when trilling the “r” in “eb’rywhere.”⁷⁸

An avid opponent of the European style, and often brash critic of his contemporaries, Charles Ives sought to create a uniquely American genre. Included in his *114 Songs* collection from 1922, Ives set hymns like “Nearer My God to Thee” and “At the River.” In this same book are “common man” songs featuring dialect, such as the Western cowboy song “Charlie Rutlage,” and “The Greatest Man,” based on a poem by Kentuckian, Anne Timoney Collins.⁷⁹ Printed in the *Evening Sun* in 1921, Collins’ poem included some Southern colloquialisms. Yet, Ives made changes to certain word spellings, “clarifying the poem’s meaning and/or making more consistent its colloquialisms”⁸⁰:

I got to thinkin’ ‘bout my pa;
he ain’t a hero ‘r anything but pshaw!
Say! He can ride the wildest hoss
n’ find minners near the moss down by the creek;
'n he can swim 'n fish, we ketched five new lights, me 'n him!⁸¹

The first recording of “The Greatest Man” was performed by baritone Mordecai

⁷⁸ Ernestine Schumann-Heink, “Ernestine Schumann-Heink, ‘Old Folks at Home’ (Foster) (rec. 1918),” YouTube video posted by “dtshu,” Uploaded August 17, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JKmJqaG4oc>.

⁷⁹ Charles Ives, *144 Songs, International Music Score Library Project*, Redding, CT: C. E. Ives, n.d., 1922, <http://imslp.org/>.

⁸⁰ H. Whiney Hitchcock, ed, *Critical Commentaries for Charles Ives: 129 Songs*, American Musicological Society, Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 2004. 285.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Bauman in 1938. In this recording, Bauman flips some initial and intervocalic r's, yet sings the colloquial [ɹ] in “hero ‘r anything.”⁸² With regional Southern diction, he sings *my* as [mɔ] and glides through ending [i] sounds: “he ain’t” becomes [hi ‘jeɪnt], and “me ’n” is sung [mi jɪn]. The written dialect for “minners” proved difficult, as Bauman pronounced the word *miners*. Later recordings exhibit more interpretation of the accent. In a recording from 1994, more diphthongs and shortened vowels can be heard by singer Paul Sperry. Similar to Bauman’s interpretation, Sperry sings bright ‘a’ diphthongs with standard diction, *my* is sung [maɪ], *ride* is sung [raɪd], and closes to the consonants ’n and ‘r as directed. However, some words are pronounced with a regional Southern approach, such as *creek* being sung [kɹɪk].⁸³

Thomas Hampson, face of the *Song of America Project*, has recorded many art songs spanning the early compositions of Stephen Foster, Francis Hopkinson, and Charles Ives to more recent additions by Paul Bowles and William Grant Still. His diction for these songs is a split between extensive formal training and his interpretation of Americanizing the text. In recordings for *Song of America Project*, Hampson’s vocal style is characterized by tall/round British vowels, crisp consonants —sometimes with a rolled/flipped [r], and clear endings to “-ing” sounds.⁸⁴ Yet, he Americanizes ending “I” by extending its duration, and colors some “r” sounds with the American [ɹ] in words like

⁸² “Mordecai Bauman - Six songs (Ives),” YouTube video posted by “Historical stars of the concert stage,” uploaded May 17, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbDjvof5QBU>.

⁸³ “The Greatest Man,” *The Complete Songs of Charles Ives: Vol IV*, Albany Records, Naxos Music Library, No.: TROY080, 1994.

⁸⁴ Thomas Hampson, *Wondrous Free: Song of America II*, Thomas Hampson Media, 2009. In William Grant Still’s “Grief”, Hampson articulates the end of *morning* with a hard [ŋ]/[g], rather than with the relaxed [n]/[ŋ].

“rolling river.”⁸⁵ His performances of *Blue Mountain Ballads* by Paul Bowles and Tennessee Williams are performed with slightly more regional Southern accent, using elongated [l] and [ɹ] and clipped word endings, or performing with the score-written dialect, such as the words ‘teef’ for ‘teeth’, “ole”, and “ain’t”.⁸⁶

More recent compositions feature colloquial singing, extended vocal techniques, and encourage the use of regional Southern accent. George Crumb’s *American Songbooks* include well-known Southern hymns and folk tunes. “Lord, Let Me Fly” is featured in *American Songbook VII*, and Crumb’s setting of “Black, Black, Black is the Color” and “All the Pretty Little Horses” are songs from his Appalachian collection, *Unto the Hills*. His daughter, Ann Crumb recorded each of these songs and sang with a colloquial, more relaxed American accent, as written in the music score. Specifically notated, Crumb instructs the singer to sound “strident, metallic in timbre: like a hymn singer from rural Appalachia!”⁸⁷

The reception of this folk-like singing has been mixed. In a classical CD review, critic Steven Ritter applauds Crumb’s settings, but was displeased with Ann’s singing. He writes, “Ms. Crumb uses bent notes and other pop-like inflections that seem totally out of place, not unlike the feeling one gets when some pop star jazzes up the National Anthem

⁸⁵ Ibid., In “Shenandoah”, Hampson makes use of the elongated American [l] for beginnings of words.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Examples of Hampson singing with mild regional Southern accent are found in Paul Bowles *Blue Mountain Ballads* in songs, “Heavenly Grass”, “Lonesome Man”, and “Sugar in the Cane.”

⁸⁷ George Crumb, *American Songbook I: The River of Life*, 2003, 5.

at a sporting event. It is a mixing of worlds that to me simply does not add up.”⁸⁸

Contrastingly, other listeners are more accepting of Ann’s style:

She sings her father’s settings in a light, pop voice more readily associated with the Broadway stage...[her] voice seems to work best for this music, particularly in these settings given the familiar American, and specifically Appalachian, milieu of the texts.⁸⁹

The aim for authenticity of folk tunes in classical music has long been a struggle. Contemporary composers are taking more chances in blending folk singing styles with classical orchestration. Evan Chambers’ *Old Burying Ground*, is a setting of epitaphs from graveyard sites in which he visited. Chambers sets the texts with colloquial diction, modern singing techniques, and specifically calls for a folk-singer. “Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of this piece is the folk element, which is strongly conveyed through the plangent voice of Tim Eriksen; the epitaphs he sings have the authentic tang of rustic New England.”⁹⁰

Many singers explore twang, scoops, blurred consonants, and clipped endings when appropriate. Popular examples of this are found in many of Aaron Copland’s *Old American Songs*, and John Jacob Niles’ setting of the Appalachian carol, “I Wonder as I Wander.” Some recordings of this carol feature authentic instrumentation with dulcimer, in which the singers take more liberty in pronunciation, especially with the final

⁸⁸ Stephen Ritter, “George Crumb: The River of Life,” *Audophile Audition* RSS, Audophile Audition, April 17, 2007. <http://audaud.com>.

⁸⁹ Dave Lewis, “Crumb: The River of Life; Unto the Hills,” *Songs, Reviews, Credits and Awards*, AllMusic, <http://www.allmusic.com/album/crumb-the-river-of-life-unto-the-hills-mw0001400648>.

⁹⁰ Blair Sanderson, *Evan Chambers: The Old Burying Ground, Books 1-2*, Naxos review excerpt from [allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com), December 2010, <http://www.naxos.com/reviews>.

elongated ‘r’ sound, [ɹ].⁹¹ *Southerly: Art Songs of the American South*, is a recent recording of voice and piano that features new compositions about Southern stories. Though sung with precise diction, no Southern regional accents nor colloquialisms can be heard.⁹² One song titled “First Amendment” is composed by James Sclater on a text by Alabama-born writer, Ovid Vickers. This poem references Telfair County, Georgia and alludes to a very rare, and uniquely Southern, practice of congregational serpent-handling⁹³: “I don’t know what you came to do[, b]ut I came to praise the Lord” and “They shall take up serpents. Glory, in the name of the Lord!”⁹⁴ Though these lines present opportunity for Southern dialect, singer Jos Milton opts for non-regional American diction. The inconsistencies among singers performing with or without accent is something that will likely never be solved. As stated throughout this document, classical vocal arts leave room for incorporation of more authenticity when interpreting speech to voice.

⁹¹ Recorded examples of I Wonder as I Wander set with dulcimer include albums *Simply Christmas* (2009) by Deborah Henriksson and Andrew Parrott’s *Christmas Carols* (2007).

⁹² *Southerly: Art Songs of the American South*, Jos Milton, Albany Records, 2016.

⁹³ Simon J. Bronner, editor, *Encyclopedia of American Folklife*, Vol.4, Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2006. 1143. “Snake-handling sects derive their name from a literal interpretation of the Gospel according to Mark 16:17-18... ‘And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.’ [S]nake-handling preachers formed independent Pentecostal Holiness churches, generally known as the Church of God with Signs Following, during the 1940s...Owing to the autonomy of each snake-handling group, it is difficult to know exactly how many people currently are members of snake-handling sects, but estimates range between one thousand and two thousand church members, of which only five hundred actively practice ceremonial snake handling[. They are] mostly centered in east Tennessee and Kentucky, but also found in Florida, Texas, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Georgia.”

⁹⁴ Ibid, CD Booklet. *Whether or not a serpent-handling church exists in Telfair County, GA is undetermined.

Kenneth Frazelle's *Appalachian Songbooks*

American Art songs continue to feature texts and folksongs settings specific to the Southeast. The culmination of my graduate studies came about through the discovery, analysis, and performance journey of Kenneth Frazelle's *Appalachian Songbooks I & II*, and Doug Borwick's *Southern Comfort*. These works contrast in style and setting, however make great pairings given their themes, authenticity, and variance of the Southern understanding.

From a family of Scotts-Irish and English farmers, composer Kenneth Frazelle's roots are deeply tied to North Carolina. Frazelle's upbringing was enriched with Southern Baptist congregational singing and folk music. "His father was a folk singer and could play several instruments by ear, while an older cousin played the banjo and fiddle."⁹⁵ Frazelle started playing piano at nine years old, and studied composition and piano at the North Carolina School of the Arts. While his most-performed works are written for piano, Frazelle's Appalachian folk song settings provide new opportunities for recital programming.

When first beginning my studies of *Appalachian Songbook I & II*, I was intrigued by the folksongs and hymns chosen by Frazelle. Of the eight pieces in *Songbook I*, I selected "Charmin' Birdie,"⁹⁶ "Barbra Allen," "Groundhog," and "In East Virginy" to include in the recording with pianist, Aimee Fincher. Selections from *Songbook II* include "The Cuckoo," "Pretty Saro," "Our Good Man," and "Billy Boy." Though these

⁹⁵ Joanne Elizabeth Inkman, "Kenneth Frazelle's "Blue Ridge Airs I" and Sonata for Cello and Piano: A Synthesis of Music, Poetry, and Nature," (DMA diss., UNC at Greensboro, 1993), ProQuest (ID 304051512).

⁹⁶ There exists discrepancy in spelling of "Birdie" and "Birdy" between the score and the table of contents.

pieces vary in theme and style, Frazelle creates distinction of this repertoire by “fusing indigenous folk song of the South and Appalachian Mountains with Western art music.”⁹⁷ Each of these songs begin with the piano taking on the role of the folk instrument that was likely used to accompany the narration. Examples include the dulcimer-like quality of high, rolled chords that open “Billy Boy,” or the syncopated staccato opening of “Groundhog” imitating a banjo.

The strophic nature of these pieces, and folk songs in general, makes it is easy to deliver the same approach for each verse. The narration is enhanced by qualities in the piano’s texture, dynamics, and density, often painting the text accordingly. Considering many of these folk songs have previously appeared in Frazelle’s orchestral and piano works, his treatment of them as art songs is quite similar. Frazelle will typically begin with a simple accompaniment for the introduction and first strophe. Following lines are then underscored with elements like octave doubling, harmonic shifts, or rhythmic changes depending on the literary action. Referring to his musical style, Frazelle’s defining characteristics include “a strong sense of rhythm, a unique harmonic language, a lyrical nature, a wide range of expression, and an imaginative sense of color.”⁹⁸

In addition to his blend of musical ‘color,’ Frazelle’s lyricism is influenced by William Faulkner’s marriage of disjunct elements: “Through his novels, I have gained insight into the process of interior consciousness, the coexistence of past and present, and into the writer’s vision of the complex psyche of the South.”⁹⁹ Dialect and non-standard

⁹⁷ Inkman, 119.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 58.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 40. From a 1993 interview with Frazelle.

colloquialisms from the Southern oral tradition are preserved in Frazelle's contemporary settings. Truncated word endings, and words like "ort" "hog-eyed" and "a-swellin'" appear in both books, in his manuscript copy and in printed editions. Though numerous markings of dialect appear throughout the scores, the approach for singing these pieces should acknowledge their North Carolina-specific region.

Ethnomusicologist and folk song specialist, Alan Lomax refers to the style of Appalachian folk singers in his book, *Folksongs of North America*. "[S]ome of the voices we hear on field recordings are cracked with age and hard living, but they have everything to teach us if we wish to learn to sing folk songs well."¹⁰⁰ Lomax compares the difficulty of singing folk songs "as difficult to master as the *bel canto* of our opera singers."¹⁰¹ Authentically replicating an Appalachian folk singer is not only very difficult, it is also problematic for classical singing, which encourages tall vowels, an open throat, and rich overtones. This is near opposite of Lomax's description of Southern backwoods singing "produced out of a tense body and throat,"¹⁰² and his suggestion that "the voice should be hard, tight, impersonal, and nasal (if you like)—a narrator's voice."¹⁰³ Though Lomax's directions indicate the most authentic approach for replication, it is unlikely the style Frazelle had in mind when specifying the "colloquial

¹⁰⁰ Alan Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America: In the English Language*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1975. xxviii-xxix.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* xxviii.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, xxix.

manner” for singing *Appalachian Songbook I*.¹⁰⁴ For recording purposes, my approach acknowledged the history of the songs, the composer’s style, and the authenticity of the text with word clarity and musical artistry the primary goals.

Kathryn LaBouff writes that “intelligibility is the highest priority in any dialect work. Often it is best to use only a few of the characteristics of a dialect and give a ‘flavor’ of it rather than every single characteristic and lose intelligibility.”¹⁰⁵ Word spellings like “runnin’” or “ol” helped me pinpoint specific words that would utilize regional vernacular. Drawing from experience, and validating that with Kathryn LaBouff’s dialect rules, I was able to deliver Appalachian specific nuances like glottalized ’t’s and squeezed ending vowels. Commenting on the dialect from his experience in Kentucky’s Laurel County in 1917, Cecil Sharp writes: “Their speech is English, not American... it is clear that they are talking the language of a past day.”¹⁰⁶ Sharp continues by noting the pronunciation of *it* as “‘hit’—a practice that seems to be universal.”¹⁰⁷

My efforts began by applying all of these characteristics to the lyrics through speech. Once applied to the music, I would listen back to recorded rehearsals in search of lost words or uncharacteristically exaggerated sounds. If the text became unclear, or

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Frazelle. “Appalachian Songbook I (1989-2000) Voice and Piano, 20 Min.” In the description of these pieces, Frazelle writes, “The songs are meant to be sung in a colloquial manner.” <http://www.kennethfrazelle.com/work1.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Kathryn LaBouff, *Singing and Communicating in English : A Singer’s Guide to English Diction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 266.

¹⁰⁶ Cecil Sharp and Olive Dame Campbell, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1917, v.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

sounded more like a caricature, I would relax the accent. Given the eloquence of Frazelle’s music, anything more than a mild accent seemed unfitting; exceptions existed for comedy songs, or musically accented words.

A similar method was taken for Doug Borwick’s *Southern Comfort*, however the selections are written in a style vastly different from Frazelle’s works and required an original approach, which is later discussed. Each of the recorded songs from the *Appalachian Songbooks* are listed below and given a brief history, lyrics, elements of my interpretation, and choices of dialect. Provided in this document are IPA transcriptions of the songs to accompany the recording (found in annex), and links to the recordings are found in Works Cited.

“Charmin’ Birdy”¹⁰⁸

“Charmin’ Birdie” appears first in Frazelle’s Appalachian collection, and was also quoted in his piano work, *Blue Ridge Airs I*. His folk song sources span from collections by Cecil Sharp, and Alan Lomax collections to individual versions passed down by oral tradition.¹⁰⁹ “Charmin’ Birdie,” derived from the folk song “Charmin’ Betsy,” is sourced from Frazelle’s grandmother.¹¹⁰ In the edited score, Frazelle attributes this version to include his partner Rick Mashburn.¹¹¹

All around the mountain Charmin’ Birdy.
All around the mountain runnin’ free.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁹ Inkman, 63.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Kenneth Frazelle, *Appalachian Songbook*, Music Score, Subito Music: Notevole Music Publishing Co., 2000.

If I never ever see you again
Won't you please remember me?
Thought I saw you comin' through the garden.
Happy just to meet you once again.
Heard your jingle jangle pretty girl dance
Or was it only the wind?

When working on the dialect for this piece, I made sure to sing the shortened “-ing” endings as directed by Frazelle, and added more “r” coloring for words *never* and *heard*. Another phonetic change I took followed LeBouff’s direction: “medial t’s are flapped or glottalized.”¹¹² Considering Frazelle sets *mountain* both times with a descending pitch on the secondary syllable, I chose to glottalize the “t.” Similarly presented is *pretty*, which is sung [‘pɹɪ di]. Towards the ending, I tried to use an aspirate [h] preceding ‘it,’ yet, the speed of the words created more of an aspirate glide. The texture of the piano and treatment of the melody encouraged me to reduce the twang of Appalachian dialect. I kept my vowels relatively tall and aimed for purity of sound for instances in which a monosyllabic word was placed on a long note; example includes the word *you* being pronounced [ju] rather than singing [jʌ], and kept *wind* with an open [ɪ].

“The Cuckoo”¹¹³

First in *Appalachian Songbook II*, “The Cuckoo” is taken from the English love song tradition, and earliest arrangements appear in Jean Ritchie’s folksong book. She writes, “My family has always known this song, it seems. It is fairly similar to the

¹¹² LeBouff, 269.

¹¹³ Kenneth Frazelle, *Appalachian Songbook II*, Music Score, Subito Music: Notevole Music Publishing Co., 2009.

variants found in and around Hindman in Knott County, where my father's folks lived."¹¹⁴ Though numerous versions of this song exist, Frazelle's melody aligns most with Ritchie's, and the song stays centered on the tragedy of the unfaithful husband. "From ancient times the [cuckoo] has been a sexual symbol and, because it leaves its eggs in the nests of other birds for them to hatch, has acquired the reputation of an adulterer."¹¹⁵

The cuckoo is a pretty bird, she sings as she flies.
She brings us sweet tidings and tells us no lies.
She sucks all the pretty flowers to keep her voice clear.
She never says cuckoo 'til summer is near.

I once loved a young man as dear as my life
and he made me a promise to make me his wife.
Now my children are hungry and cryin' for bread.
My husband is off drinkin' and I wish I was dead.

Come all you young maidens take warning by me.
Never place your affections on a willow tree.
The leaves will wither and the roots will run dry.
My true love has forsaken me and I don't know why.

The grave will consume you and turn you to dust.
Not a man in a hundred a poor girl can trust.
They'll hug you, they'll kiss you, they'll tell you more lies
than the sand on the sea shore and stars in the skies.
The cuckoo is a pretty bird, she tells me no lies.

This song opens with a leap dramatically sweeping upwards as the piano takes on the role of the cuckoo. Save words like *cryin'* and *drinkin'*, there are hardly any specified dialect words. Perhaps due to the song's heritage, the words are preserved in standard English dialect. This, as well as the leaping vocal line, led me to sing with less regional accent, exceptions being the [a:] in place of [aɪ] for *flies* or *why*, and using [ʌ] sound for

¹¹⁴ Jean Ritchie, *Folk Songs of the Southern Appalachians*, 2nd ed., Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. 14. Knott County is located in the northeastern part of Kentucky.

¹¹⁵ Lomax, 201.

hungry and *dust*. Due to the song's tempo, it was much easier to glide through diphthongs and add more [ɹ] at the ends of words without chewing on the consonants. This piece is a demanding adaptation of the folk tune, and requires agility between vocal registers (the range of "The Cuckoo" is F-sharp 5 to G3), sensitivity to dynamics, and efficient breath support, all while delivering precision of the poetry.

"Barbra Allen"¹¹⁶

Possibly one of the most famous Appalachian folk tunes, a three-verse setting of "Barbra Allen" is included in Frazelle's *Songbook I*. Lomax indicates the lyrics of this Scots song, though one of hundreds, "drew tears from the English, and raised the hackles of the pioneers."¹¹⁷

'Twas in the merry month of May,
The green buds were a-swellin'
Sweet William on his deathbed lay
For the love of Barbra Allen.

O Mother come and make my bed
come make it soft and narrow
for Sweet William died today
and I will die tomorrow.

At William's grave there sprung a rose
from Barbra's grave a briar.
They twined and tied a lover's knot
for all true lovers to admire.

Frazelle sets this "song everybody knows"¹¹⁸ with a light texture of interwoven lines in the piano introduction. Numerous rests interrupt the lyrics, perhaps reflecting the

¹¹⁶ Frazelle, 5.

¹¹⁷ Lomax, 170.

¹¹⁸ Ritchie 73.

emotional nature of the piece. Almost every vocal entrance begins on weak beats, which makes it all the more obvious when the conclusion of text is highlighted, instances being the landing of words *love*, *die*, and *grave*. Frazelle's clear dynamic markings to stay *piano*, and not exceed *mezzo forte*, paired with these musical subtleties encourage the singer to approach each phrase with detachment. Though this song is known for making listeners "emotional," Lomax describes this narrative singing style: "The singers tend to be withdrawn and impersonal in their delivery, but intensely emotional at the same time."¹¹⁹ When singing Frazelle's "Barbra Allen," I hardly used any regional Southern accent, except the elongated [ɹ]. In the early stages of this song, I tested use of more accented diphthongs for words *there* and *briar* and tighter vowels for words like *in*, *and*, and *tied*; however, these all sounded completely out of place, and exaggerated. Ultimately deciding to perform this piece with standard diction, I incorporated hints of the regional Southern accent by clipping the *-n*' for *a-swellin'*, and using [ɹ] for *were* and *lover's*.

"Our Good Man"¹²⁰

This comedy song first appears in Frazelle's second songbook following "Wondrous Love" and preceding a spoken-word song in "old mountain voice."¹²¹ "Our Good Man" contains many Southern colloquialisms and stems from a British ballad also known as "The Merry Cuckold and the Kind Wife," "When I Came Home," "Seven

¹¹⁹ Lomax, 153.

¹²⁰ Frazelle, 26.

¹²¹ Frazelle, 33.

Nights Drunk,” “Five Nights Drunk,” “Three Nights Drunk,” “Cabbage Head” and plenty other alterations of the title.¹²² Folk singer Sheila K. Adams explains, “I guess if I done all seven verses of it, it would probably be bawdy, but you can only sing four of ‘em in public.”¹²³ This playful song is introduced by the piano striking a *forte* tremolo in the low bass register, which resolves to the alternating bass, or “boom-chuck” rhythm, complete with dissonances and staccatos marked “drunken” which reflect the central character’s inebriation.¹²⁴

The first night I came home as drunk as I could be
I found a horse in the stable where my horse ort to be.
Come here my little wife baby explain this thing to me.
How come a horse in the stable where my horse ort to be?

O you blind fool you crazy fool can’t you never see?
It’s nothin’ but a milk cow where your horse ort to be.

I’ve rambled this wide world over a thousand miles or more,
but a saddle on a milk cow I never saw before.

The next night I came home as drunk as I could be
I found a coat hangin’ on the rack where my coat ort to be.
Come here my little wife baby explain this thing to me.
How come a coat on the coat rack where my coat ort to be?

O you blind fool you crazy fool can’t you never see?
It’s nothin’ but a bed quilt you granted it to me.

I’ve rambled this wide world over a thousand miles or more,
but pockets on a bed quilt I never saw before.

The third night I came home as drunk as I could be
I found a head lying on the pillow where my head ort to be.
Come here my little wife baby explain this thing to me.
How come a head on the pillow where my head ort to be?

O you blind fool you crazy fool can’t you never see?

¹²² Richard Matteson, *Acoustic Music Source Book*, (Pacific: Mel Bay Publications, 2010) 87.

¹²³ Sheila K. Adams, “Four Nights Drunk (child 274),” YouTube video posted by “leanannsidhe,” Uploaded on June 1, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xP8mziyCf6M>.

¹²⁴ Frazelle, 26.

It's nothin' but a cabbage head you granted it to me.

I've rambled this wide world over a thousand miles or more,
but a moustache on a cabbage head I never saw before!

This song was the easiest to transition from speech to singing. Frazelle sets the beginning word, *the*, for each stanza on a long beat, making it easy to substitute the schwa in these cases with the stressed sound, [ʌ]. Almost all [aɪ] diphthongs were sung [a:], and 'r's were almost always sung [ɹ] or the more exaggerated [ɹ]. Having no experience with saying "ort," I drew from Shelia Adams' pronunciation, and applied phonetics, [ɔɹt], for each instance of the word. Using a different voice to represent the woman was the most problematic, and I referred to the story for creating her vocal characterizations. Though the vocal register is the same as the man, the piano is marked "brittle" and the thematic material always appears up the octave for the woman's reply. My interpretation of this came as a sweeter, almost laughing voice. I performed the man's voice with very forward placement, while the woman's voice was colored with more open throat and taller vowels.

"Groundhog"¹²⁵

Frazelle's speedy version of "the comic mountain ballad of the groundhog hunt" originated as a banjo song from the Southern Appalachian Mountains backwoods.¹²⁶ Appearing first in Frazelle's *Blue Ridge Airs I*, "[Groundhog's]" character, comic and

¹²⁵ Frazelle, *Songbook I*, 8.

¹²⁶ Lomax, 251.

hilarious, shows bizarre mountain humor.”¹²⁷ The song, with text arranged by Rick Mashburn, includes six verses; other versions include up to eleven.

Shoulder up your gun and whistle for your dog.
Goin’ to the woods to catch a groundhog. Ol’ groundhog.

Groundhog in the berry patch, he run into a log.
Suppertime come we’ll have a groundhog. Ol’ groundhog.

Here comes Fergus with a forty foot pole.
To run that groundhog out of his hole. Ol’ groundhog.

Skin that groundhog, save his hide.
Makes the best shoestring I ever tied. Ol’ groundhog.

Birdy was screamin’ and birdy she cried.
She loves her groundhog stewed and fried. Ol’ groundhog.

Yonder comes Clarence with a snigger and a grin.
Groundhog gravy all over his chin. Ol’ groundhog!

Earliest versions of this song refer to the groundhog as a *whistle-pig*, and include colloquialisms “treed him in a log” and “bet, by jinks, you could smell him.”¹²⁸ Other than the notated “n” and “ol’,” Frazelle and Mashburn emphasize Southern words like *suppertime* and *yonder*, but keep the word spellings in standard dialect. The tempo is written “slapstick” at 152-168 for the quarter note, which make word clarity somewhat difficult. Pianist Aimee Fincher and I typically performed 130-140 for the quarter note for cohesion between piano and voice. When approaching the text, I applied more forward placement and quick consonants. *Dog* became [dɛʊg], *your* was sung [jɜɹ], and *grin* was pronounced [gɹ:n]. Performing this piece in the future, I believe the original indicated tempo would be easier to sing with regional Southern diction, rather than the

¹²⁷ Inkman, 72.

¹²⁸ Lomax, 254.

slightly relaxed tempo Fincher and I recorded.

“Billy Boy”¹²⁹

Frazelle’s setting of this English tune appears as the final song in *Appalachian Songbook II*. Cited as a parody of “Lord Randal,” this tune has English, Scottish, Celtic, and Canadian variances.¹³⁰ Though some changes are present, Frazelle’s lyrics most closely resemble the 1916 version from Flag Pond, Tennessee.¹³¹

Oh, where have you been, my Billy Billy boy,
Oh, where have you been, my charmin’ Billy?
I’ve been to find a wife to brighten up my life
She’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother.
No, she’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother.

Can she make a cherry pie, my Billy Billy boy,
Can she make a cherry pie, my charmin’ Billy?
She can bake a cherry pie quick as you can blink an eye
She’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother.
No, she’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother.

Can she make a feather bed, my Billy Billy boy,
Can she make a feather bed, my charmin’ Billy?
She can make a feather bed and a pillow for my head
She’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother.
No, she’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother.

How old is she my Billy Billy boy?
How old is she my charmin’ Billy?
Twice six twice seven twice twenty and eleven,
She’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother, oh no,
She’s a young thing and won’t leave her mother.

Will you write me a song, my Billy Billy boy?
Will you write me a song, my sweet, sweet Billy?
Will you write me a song and sing it when I’m gone?

I approached this song in the same manner as “Barbra Allen.” While some words fit

¹²⁹ Frazelle, *Appalachian Songbook II*, 41-47.

¹³⁰ Bertrand Harris Bronson, and Francis James Child, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, Vol. 1, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959.

¹³¹ Bronson, 231.

the regional Southern accent, like *charmin'*, the text setting is better performed with a very mild accent. I interpreted some words with regional Southern dialect. I elongated the 'r' in *where*, glottalized the medial 't' in *brighten*, and turned the [aɪ] diphthong into a monophthong. Frazelle ends this piece with a fifth verse, unknown in origin. This verse, marked in a slower tempo, is the only example of the speaker addressing herself. Additionally, Frazelle sets the climax of the vocal phrase "sing it when I'm gone" with emphasis on the word *gone*, appearing as the highest and loudest note of the song. Such musical activity is better performed with a standard accent to end "Billy Boy."

"In East Virginny"¹³²

Among the folk tunes used in *Blue Ridge Airs I*, Frazelle included "In East Virginny." "[A] drone-like texture imitating the dulcimer... accompan[ies] the folk tune."¹³³ Frazelle sets the piece in D-Dorian mode, and again alludes to the dulcimer, instructing the pianist to "create a drone."¹³⁴ This song appears in the Jean Ritchie songbook as "Old Virginny." She reflects on the song's history: "My father... used to slip off into the deep woods on Sundays with his young friends to play 'forbidden music'...Anything that wasn't church singing was sinful, and the fiddle was without question the instrument of the Devil."¹³⁵

I was born in East Virginny. North Car'lina is my home.
There I saw a fair young lady. But her name I did not know.

¹³² Frazelle, 14.

¹³³ Inkman, 64.

¹³⁴ Frazelle, *Appalachian Songbook I*, 14.

¹³⁵ Ritchie, 65.

Her hair was the darkest color. And her cheeks were ruby red.
On her breast she wore white lilies. Oh the tears for her I shed.

Now I'm alone on some dark ocean where the sun will never shine
'Cause you have another darling, and I know you'll never be mine.

This piece is another setting in which Frazelle indicates hushed dynamics for the majority of the song. Each stanza begins *pianissimo*, and is accompanied with a thin texture. Following in this style, the tempo is notated *molto adagio* with the quarter note equaling 50. Typically, Frazelle's slower, quiet pieces are more difficult to incorporate the regional Southern accent; however, "In East Virginny" allows an easy balance between open vowels —[a] for Car'lina, smooth diphthong glides, and final 'r's as in *color* and *her*. Though not designated in the score, I chose to drop the 'g' in *darling*, since to my ears it sounded appropriate to the text.

"Pretty Saro"¹³⁶

"Pretty Saro" was the last of the *Appalachian Songbook* pieces Aimee Fincher and I recorded. This piece was created "by combining a version found in the Sharp collection with a friend's version."¹³⁷ Also known as the "Wagoner's Lad" and "Pretty Molly," the lyrics most closely resemble a version from Millport, Alabama.¹³⁸ Frazelle's lyrics mirror the first stanza, but deviate by the second and third verses.

I came to this country in eighteen forty-nine.
I saw many lovers, but never saw mine.
I looked all around me and saw I was alone

¹³⁶ Frazelle, *Songbook II*, 16.

¹³⁷ Inkman, 63.

¹³⁸ Ray B. Browne, *The Alabama Folk Lyric: A Study in Origins and Media of Dissemination*, Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1979.

And me a poor stranger a long way from home.

I wish I was a little dove and had wings to fly
Far across the ocean through dark clouds and sky.
In her lily white arms all night I would lay
'Til the sun comes up and brings in the day.

Farewell my father and my sweet mother too.
I'm goin' to ramble this whole world through.
And when I get tired I'll sit down and cry
And think on pretty Saro with tears in my eyes.

This setting is presented as a slow waltz with a countermelody throughout.

Interestingly, Frazelle makes no dynamic markings for the voice or piano, except for a long decrescendo on the final word, *eyes*, which fades to nothing. Additionally, there are no indications of dropped consonants, colloquialisms, or articulation markings. Taking Frazelle's only markings in the piano, *semplice e dolce* and *pronunziato*, I incorporated the directions into the vocal line, and treated the poetry like that of "East Virginny." I took the opportunity in "Pretty Saro" to explore singing techniques of a folk singer. Careful not to exaggerate, I used a descending slide to connect the syllables in *many*, and lengthened the duration of vowels in *farewell*, creating a triphthong [ferɜwɛl].

Practice with Appalachian dialect, and knowledge of the folk tunes made recording these pieces efficient and exploratory. I often referred to sources like Alan Lomax's film *Appalachian Journey*, and Kathryn LaBouff's directions in "Regional Dialects Found in Repertoire," which specifies the phonetics of a general Southern dialect and the Appalachian linguistics. Specific to the Appalachian dialect is their extremely forward placed vowels, and often nasal twang. Though that type of characteristic may be appropriate for speech, it is quite the opposite for singing. In summation, my delivery of an authentic dialect for Frazelle's *Appalachian Songbook I & II* was centered on text

clarity, upholding the composer's specifications, and interpreting the poetry based on historical information.

Doug Borwick's *Southern Comfort*

Originally from Iowa, Doug Borwick completed *Southern Comfort*, a song cycle set to poems by Emily H. Wilson in 1985. The four pieces chosen to record were "Southern Fiction," "Love," "Sisters," and "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Immersion." Though the work is not frequently performed, it is illustrative of Borwick's compositional style. His vast musical experience includes "children's choirs in church, private piano and trumpet lessons, ... public school arts [for] music and theatre" and holding a position for nearly three decades as Director of Arts Management at Salem College in Winston-Salem.¹³⁹

Borwick's style is contemporary, rarely following traditional chordal structures, unless alluding to a specific genre or theme. Often motivic, sometimes sequential, the vocal line expands on traditional harmonic structures with seventh chords and dissonances. Frequent tempo changes mark the spirit of the text and thematic action, exemplifying Borwick's consideration of setting the poetry. Provided in the score, a Greensboro North Carolina spectator reviewed *Southern Comfort*:

Borwick seems to have fashioned something really fine here: direct, earthy, emotional music full of subdued fervor and idiomatic 'Southern' mood. I was reminded of the power and sweetness of Barber's *Knoxville Summer of 1915*; while Borwick's style is his own, and in no way beholden to Barber or anyone else, these songs mine the same vein as Barber's masterpiece, and do it with vast skill.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Doug Borwick, "Engaging Matters: Doug Borwick on Vibrant Arts and Communities," ArtsJournal, <http://www.artsjournal.com/engage/doug-borwick/>.

¹⁴⁰ Borwick, *Southern Comfort*, Back cover.

In the only other review of *Southern Comfort*, Judith Carman comments on the text setting and her aversion to pitch doubling in the piano:

The syllabic setting of the text occasionally matches normal word stress, and melodies roam over a wide range in predictable patterns...[T]he vocal line is doubled by the piano most of the time...This cycle might possibly be useful, at least in part, for a mezzo who has good diction, a knack for story telling, and a liking for the underbelly of Southern life, but who needs help from the piano with pitches.¹⁴¹

Though reception of this song cycle has been mixed, there are many opportunities for the singer to explore text interpretation, utilize regional Southern accent, and sample character voices. Borwick states “I am not a native Southerner...But the humor and pathos of these lines speak volumes about the ‘Southern experience’ as I have seen it and as others have described it to me.”¹⁴² Wilson, who was born in Ohio, features specific images in her poems, often finding interest in the less beautiful objects and experiences.¹⁴³ Poet Robert Fernandez describes Wilson’s work as “dramas of equilibrium and disequilibrium, of structure and language breaking apart, recomposing, transforming, and finding new forms.”¹⁴⁴ The poems Borwick chose to include are filled with images of Southern peculiarities—dolls in china closets, sleeping on porches, playing gourd instruments.¹⁴⁵

Wilson does not include written dialect in her poems, except for quotations. Not

¹⁴¹ Judith Carman, “Music Review: Doug Borwick ‘Southern Comfort’,” *The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing*, 54, no. 1, September 1997: 71.

¹⁴² Borwick, *Southern Comfort*, 3.

¹⁴³ “Emily Wilson,” Biography, *The Poetry Foundation*, Chicago, IL, 2017.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/emily-wilson>.

¹⁴⁴ Robert Fernandez, “Four Poems by Emily Wilson,” PEN America, last modified January 14, 2015,
<http://pen.org/four-poems-by-emily-wilson/>.

¹⁴⁵ Borwick, 3.

included in the recording, “Blue Ridge and Louisiana” provides character’s lines, “an instrument’d play better n’ a gourd,” and later refers to a woman who “swore in two syllables, ‘Shee-it!’”¹⁴⁶ Despite sparse written dialect in the poetry, Borwick drops vowels and consonants for his musical settings, turning *across* into “‘cross,” *about* into “‘bout,” and “‘fore” from *before*.¹⁴⁷ I interpreted these specifications as permission to employ, at the very least, a mild general Southern accent.

These poems, all written in the 1970’s, have clearer margins for their settings and time periods than traditional folk tunes. The “summer of ’52” is specified in the song “Southern Fiction,” the poem “Love” features a 1929 slogan from Coca-Cola,¹⁴⁸ and “The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Immersion” describes the electrocution of a preacher caused by his lapel microphone, a technology dating back to the 1930’s.¹⁴⁹ Areas of the South that are mentioned in *Southern Comfort*’s entirety include North Carolina, Texas, and Louisiana. Due to the vastly different dialects among these states, I could not apply the same method of performance practice here as I did for Frazelle’s *Appalachian Songbooks*. Instead, I analyzed each song selection one at a time, speaking the poetry with a “general Southern” accent that could be heard in the mid-late 20th century. If there was a specified location, I sought to alter my diction appropriately. My experience of the Mississippi, Tennessee, and North Carolina dialects in conjunction with study of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Borwick, *Southern Comfort*, 5, 10, 32.

¹⁴⁸ “A History of Coca-Cola Advertising Slogans,” Coca-Cola Company, last modified January 1, 2012, <http://www.coca-colacompany.com>.

¹⁴⁹ G. W. A. Dummer, *Electronic Inventions and Discoveries: Electronics from Its Earliest Beginnings to the Present Day*, 4th rev., Philadelphia, PA: Institute of Physics Publications, 1997. Accessed via Google Books, February 4, 2017.

LaBouff's "General Southern" accent guide, and Rachel Allbritten's "Sounding Southern" dissertation acted as my primary sources for approaching the unified traits among Southern states.

"Southern Fiction"¹⁵⁰

Opening the song cycle, "Southern Fiction" centers around rural Southern life during a summer drought. This piece, while not vocally demanding, is difficult to approach due to its constantly changing harmonic structure and metric variance. There are seven meter changes within the first 10 measures. A constant rocking motion in the form of block chords appears throughout most of the song, and a descending line in the piano reflects the scene, "rivers ran to a trickle."

Summer of '52, beans dried up in the fields, rivers ran to a trickle.
We stayed inside most of the day; slept on the porch at night.
Ben was writing a novel and swore more than I ever remembered.
We washed it down with bourbon.
'Cross the road a hound dog turned up his legs and died.
We had to look at him till he stank, then Ben dragged him off.
Sometimes I look over there and see him still.
'Was so hot Mama wore out a handkerchief wiping off the sweat.
Must have been hot enough between her breasts to suffocate.
Even the bugs went crazy buzzing the screen at night
screaming for light when they meant water.
Put on a hat if you're going out.
Draw the front shades. Take a nap after lunch.
We survived by these means but memories burned out.
Everything 'bout the summer of '52 asks for air.

When first exploring this song, I immediately felt the oppressiveness of the Southern heat. The leisurely opening measures, following by the pulsing rhythmic

¹⁵⁰ Borwick, 4-10. Borwick makes some changes to Wilson's original poetry: "Across the road" is set, "cross the road" and "everything about the summer" is set "everything 'bout the summer."

ostinato in the piano, and the echoes of the vocal phrases, all painted imagery of slow, simmering heat. The relaxed tempo and comfortable vocal range simplified my choice to sing with a drawl pertaining to the regional Southern accent. Rather than the Appalachian approach of high-placement and forward singing, the Southern drawl includes more elongation on back vowels; words like *dog* [dɔʊg], *look* [ˈlɔ ək], and *off* [ɔʊf]. Upon vocal delivery, however, my dialect for *look* did not uphold its clarity and was heard as the word *luck*. For this instance, I reverted to its standard pronunciation. General regional Southern traits like substituting [ɪ] for short vowels in words *than* and *been*, were upheld, as well as lengthening ‘r’s. Having listened to the finished recording, there is room for more regional dialect without the distortion of text.

“Love”¹⁵¹

This short song with “a delightful and somewhat risqué text about sex” depicts romance between two flies in a Coca-Cola can near a tennis match in North Carolina.¹⁵²

While the tennis match drones on
in the wet heat of North Carolina,
two flies make love
inside the secrets of a Coca Cola can.

Pause that refreshes!
Let the sun shine, the sweat pop,
let the players grunt and fall,¹⁵³
But life goes on in vintage syrup.
Someone’s leftovers too good to miss,
and the flies swoon,
rubbing their legs in ecstasy.

¹⁵¹ Borwick, 11-15.

¹⁵² Keith E. Clifton, *Recent American Art Song: A Guide*, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2008. 28.

¹⁵³ Wilson’s line “the spectators turn their heads” is omitted in the musical setting

Our happy hour!
Drink up and come inside
my 12 oz. can with me,
and let's make love.
The score is oh and oh.

Borwick paints the scene with a continuing pattern of arpeggios in the left hand and sporadic quick dissonances in the right hand. Though the vocal writing in “Love” is smooth, it often resides in a high register with leaps. This placement proved difficult when trying to apply the same amount of dialect as in “Southern Fiction.” In the recording, my focus was clarifying the text as much as possible, thus reducing the opportunity for many regional Southern phonetics. Exceptions were the words, *shine* [ʃa:n] and *leftovers* [lɛft ʌvɜːɹz]. One peculiarity in this song unlike the rest of the recorded selections, was the attention to ending consonants. What would normally have become a glottalized ’t’ in the word *sweat* became an aspirate [t]; likewise, the distinction between [s] and [z] can be heard in *flies swoon*.

“Sisters”¹⁵⁴

One of his most ruminative songs, “Sisters” is “lyrical, tonal, and Romantic” in style.¹⁵⁵ Though the original poem is comprised of six stanzas, Borwick eliminates two, presenting the poem in four musical sections.¹⁵⁶

In Southern towns I know unmarried sisters live together
in the fam’ly home.

¹⁵⁴ Borwick, 16-19.

¹⁵⁵ Clifton, 28.

¹⁵⁶ Borwick omitted verse 2 of Wilson’s poem: “They look enough alike to be sisters, and wear their hair back in a bun, and a blue dress with a white lace collar.” Additionally, Verse 5 is omitted: “They sleep side by side in the bed they were born in, and side by side they wake to the other’s need.”

They nurse Mother in long sickness, tend the graves.

Marie and Suzanna; Edwina and Rose; Therese and Pearl:
Sisters who played dolls together all their lives
And keep them now in the china closet.
This is the way we entertained when Mother was alive.
This is the way we went to church with Poppa.
This is the way the world was.

When one has bad dreams, it's of the other's dying first.
Each says her prayers and asks to be the first to go.

In a similar tempo of the opening piece, “Sisters” draws upon the deep-roots of Southern family life. The most challenging linguistic issues appeared in the third stanza due to its tessitura ranging from C-sharp to A5. In this verse, I was not effectively able to apply regional Southern accent. In other areas, however, I incorporated frequent ‘r’ colorings to [ɹ] and [ɹ̥], drawls for back vowels [ɑʊ] and [ʌ], and monophthongization of [aɪ]. During initial stages of dialect work on this piece, I incorporated the “in” ending for *dying*. I later abandoned this practice, as I found clipping the ‘n’ detracted the poetic idea of this line; the listener’s ear was drawn to the word *dyin*’ instead of Wilson’s emphasis on *first*.

“The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Immersion”¹⁵⁷

Wilson’s “humorous, irreverent text about a Southern preacher who electrocutes himself during a baptism” is set to block hymn-style chords, which “imitates a church organ” and driving rhythms.¹⁵⁸

Brothers: A word from Dallas, Texas.

¹⁵⁷ Borwick, 32-37.

¹⁵⁸ Clifton 2.

Preacher got his hide fried in the act of saving one for Christ.
It's enough to make Christians pray twice
'fore turning on a switch while standing in the bathtub.

When the preacher of
the First Seventh Day Adventist Church
turned his flock onto Jesus,
he felt pretty near exhilarated
by the 110 volts of electricity charging up his nerves.

It happened just that way:
he was wading in the water
sanctified in the baptismal bubble
when he switched on his microphone,¹⁵⁹
to bring the people closer to God.
Zap! He was, in a word, electrocuted.

If it says in the good book
he who loses his life for my sake shall find it,
The preacher was a real big winner-
consider the living evidence of an ex-sinner,
his sins washed away. Speechless, too.

No one remembers where the flock got off to
or even who pulled out the plug.
The saved were certain of just one thing:
to gather together, closer, down front,
when the new preacher whispers,
"Jesus, Can you hear me?"

Perhaps Borwick's most theatrical song, this piece opens with the narrator reading a letter from Dallas. Rather than encapsulating the northeastern Texas dialect itself, I chose a general Southern accent, though often with more [ɪ] vowels in place of the unstressed schwa. Examples include *Dallas, Texas*; in both words, the second syllable is pronounced with a schwa in standard American phonetics: [ˈtɛ ksəs], however, I chose to sing [ˈdæ lɪs ˈtɛ ksɪs]. Other regional Southern traits I included were shortening the “-ing” endings to “n’,” and “r”s placed farther back [ɹ]. Interestingly, when comparing this recording to a

¹⁵⁹ Borwick omits the word “concealed” before microphone for the musical setting.

live performance I gave one year prior, I found more forward-placed vowels, thicker accent, and clipped endings. In the live performance, I used facial contortions, movements, and staging to replicate the narration. During the recording process, however, my mouth was directed at the studio microphone, so I remained still, which possibly resulted in the dilution of my Southern accent.

In my approach to singing with regional Southern accents for both *Appalachian Songbooks I & II* and *Southern Comfort*, it was difficult to navigate the degree of accent that should be utilized. Extensive listening study of operas, musical theatre shows, and American art song clarified that my approach would have to be based on trial and error. I would embrace listening back to my practices, recitals, and recordings to make conscious decisions to dilute some aspects of Southernisms as to avoid caricatures. Naturally, when speaking, the effects can be heard immediately, as the duration of the words or phrase is much shorter than in singing. Another factor to consider is the difference in dialects among Southeastern states. The “General American Southern” accent according to Jerry Blunt in *Stage Dialects* comments:

In spite of the fact that it is impossible to phonetically assert the existence of a uniform Southern dialect, it still is possible to establish speech patterns on a prototype model for those who would learn a Southern dialect. A body of distinctive characteristics, common to all varieties, provides a broad and truthful basis for the creation of a ‘standard’ Southern speech.¹⁶⁰

Blunt continues to describe incorrect perceived characteristics of the Southern voice, including the falsehood “that all Southern speech is uniformly slow,” due to its elongated

¹⁶⁰ Jerry Blunt, *Stage Dialects*, Woodstock, IL: The Dramatic Publishing Company, 1967.

diphthongs or even ‘climactic conditions’.¹⁶¹ In regional Southern voices, “characteristic stress, which is often heavier than in general American speech, is achieved through lengthening of vowels and more pronounced pitch change.”¹⁶² This pitch change refers to different inflections of words, especially those at the ends of phrases, or when a diphthong becomes squeezed, such as in the word “*there*” which becomes [‘ðe jəʌ].

Diction coach David Alan Stern provides an example of how the “standard received aristocratic British dialect” —often referred to as a *lilt*—easily becomes *Southern* when spoken with pitch inflections.¹⁶³ Stern demonstrates with a phrase first pronounced in an English accent: “My mother and father went here, there, and everywhere.” He applies the squeezed diphthong for all open vowels of the same phrase, resulting in “what was for years an aristocratic Southern accent.”¹⁶⁴

In *Sounding Southern*, a dissertation on phonetics of the American South, Rachael Allbritten writes that people “generally recognize that it is possible to perceive the accent of Southerners as being on a continuum of ‘stronger’ versus ‘weaker’ or ‘milder’.”¹⁶⁵ Allbritten investigates the outsider’s perspective on hearing specific linguistic traits as more or less Southern: “among monophthongal (ay), velar fronting of *-ing*, the Southern

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 40.

¹⁶² Scott R. MacLeod, “Creating the Southern Voice in American Opera Composition,” ProQuest Order No. 3525782, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012. 45.

¹⁶³ “Southern Accent,” Excerpt from History Channel’s *You Don’t Know Dixie*, YouTube video posted by “CZVids,” Uploaded on December 31, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPfOL4wUuMU>.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Rachael Allbritten, “Sounding Southern: Phonetic Features and Dialect Perceptions,” (DMA Diss: Georgetown University), ProQuest Order No. 3450689, 2011.

Vowel Shift (SVS), or ‘drawl’.¹⁶⁶ Though the *drawl*, or triphthongization, is less understood by linguists and laymen alike, it is referenced as particularly “white”:

In white southern speech, any vowel under stress in a one-syllable word can be lengthened, whether it is what is traditionally called a long vowel (*wide, cake, moon*), a short vowel (*cab, bed, kid*), or a diphthong (*boy, cow*).¹⁶⁷

Allbritten states, “without doubt, monophthongization of the diphthong [ɑɪ] is an extremely pervasive and well-known feature of Southern American English.”¹⁶⁸ I especially found this to be the case when applying the Southern dialects to art song. Striving to be as specific as possible when translating these recordings into IPA, it proved inconsistent when trying to identify which vowels were used in the Southern drawl. In specific cases, some lesser-used IPA characters like [ɔ̃] and [ɒ] better represented the actual sound rather than the more recognizable characters [ə] or [ɑ].

My interpretation of singing regional Southern accents has been guided by composer’s notes, appropriateness of dialect, and foremost vocal quality, tone, and resonance. The recordings of Frazelle’s *Appalachian Songbooks I & II* and Borwick’s *Southern Comfort* were performed with text intelligibility and authenticity, and choices were made to incorporate more Southern colloquialisms when appropriate to the history or setting of the song.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., iii.

¹⁶⁷ Michael Montgomery and Ellen Johnson, Editors, *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 5: Language*, 2014. 192.

¹⁶⁸ Allbritten, 10.

Conclusion

The existence of Southern characteristics for stage and vocal arts has been in practice since the 18th century. Transcriptions of words indicated the presence of “r” modification, the [aɪ] sound as an [ɑ] monophthong, and vowel shifts appearing as diphthongs and drawls. Yet, innumerable examples of their literary depictions contain unrestrained discrepancies of vowels, word spellings, and colloquialisms. Inaccurate and offensive portrayals of African Americans became staples in Southern-themed stage works and variety shows, and often writings of their different dialects were polluted with racism, generalizations, and falsities. Likewise, documented accents of poor, white rural habitants became generalized, and their regional identities were misconstrued with hybridizations of low-comedy dialect writings of African American or Irish accents.

Dialects are generational, and their preservation varies greatly on technology, interaction with others, and education. Numerous residents of the southern United States lived in poverty due to “social, infrastructural, and economic collapse after the Civil War,”¹⁶⁹ and depended on worship services or “participation and imitation” for their music education before the turn of the 20th century.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, the advent of widespread audio technology and more urbanization in Southern cities typically yielded a change of accent. “The regionalisms of southeastern rural music diluted rapidly as affordable access to radio, recording, and film spread in the 1920s.”¹⁷¹ In later decades,

¹⁶⁹ Kay Norton. “Southeast,” *Grove Music Online*, The Grove Dictionary of American Music, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2293114>.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

for instance, the city of Charlotte experienced rapid growth after becoming the second largest banking city in the 1970s.¹⁷² Native Charlottean, Martha Villas describes the city's changing linguistics: "These northerners come down here and we take 'em in, and before you know it, it's not the same...they don't think and act like we do. Well they sure don't talk like us, they have a sharpness to their speech."¹⁷³ Though preserving regional dialects in living speech is an impractical goal, performing music written in styles and time periods of past generations allows revisitation of colorful linguistics unique to America.

Many staged vocal works, as seen in librettos and heard in some recordings, include regional Southern vernacular. As understood through study of book musicals, composers have notated and continue to specify dialect and colloquialisms in the score for performance. Though all very distinct, *Show Boat*, *Big River*, and *Floyd Collins* are only few of the many musicals containing Southern dialect representative of white characters. From the 1920s through to the late 60s, trained singers like Helen Morgan, Annette Warren, and Anna Moffo exhibited Southern characteristics in their performances of "Bill" from *Show Boat*, however, it is rare for performers to use even the slightest hint of a Southern accent when performing as Magnolia. Though the libretto specifies Magnolia's speech, examples being *piano* written as "pianner" and dropped consonant endings, singers Irene Dunne, Barbara Cook, and Rebecca Luker retain tall vowels and

¹⁷² Jennifer Carrizales, "Charlotte Soars to Become the Nation's Second Largest Financial Center," North Carolina History Projects, UNC, <http://carolinahistory.web.unc.edu/charlotte-soars-to-become-the-nations-second-largest-financial-center/>.

¹⁷³ "Dialect in Southern Cities," Excerpt from "Voices of North Carolina," YouTube video posted by "The Language & Life Project," Uploaded on September 12, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFfM2GMr3II>.

standard pronunciations.¹⁷⁴ Whether it be the Mississippi dialect in turn-of-the-century *Show Boat*, 1980's Louisiana inflections in *Dead Man Walking*, the Alabama drawl in *Regina*, or rural Appalachian in *Susannah* or *Floyd Collins*, singers should analyze and apply linguistics just as well as the music for which it was written.

Additionally, inconsistencies in performance practice have continued in recent published recordings. English soprano Kate Royal's interpretation of "The Trees on the Mountain" exhibits the trilled "r" [r̄], very closed vowels, and styles of early music singing.¹⁷⁵ Though personal interpretation can be applied to characters in operas, such cases as Royal's performance conflict with the composer's intentions. Likewise, performance practice is further diluted by inaccurate suggestions from published vocal guides. Appearing in art song collections as late as the 1950's, English and American dialects were treated in the same manner, often including pronunciation suggestions. One example of this can be found in *Contemporary Songs in English: Songs by American and English Composers for Recital, Concert and Studio Use*, edited by Bernard Taylor. His section on pronunciation describes how to approach consonants:

When you sing *r* on a high note, the *r* should be flipped, but lightly...when *r* follows *d* or *t*, use the single flipped *r*... Where the combination *wh* occurs in the spelling of a word, the lips are placed in position for the *w*, but the *h* is actually pronounced first. This can be done by blowing a bit of air through the lips.¹⁷⁶

Though such suggestions would be beneficial for the young singer, a musical hierarchy regarding dialect in performance practice is adopted when treating American art song and

¹⁷⁴ Kern and Hammerstein, *Show Boat*, Libretto, 16.

¹⁷⁵ Kate Royal, *Midsummer Night*, Warner Classics, May 9, 2004. Naxos Music Library: 5099926819150

¹⁷⁶ Bernard Taylor, *Contemporary Songs in English: Songs by American and English Composers for Recital, Concert and Studio Use*, New York, NY: Carl Fischer Inc. 1956, 13-14.

English art song as parallels. The temptation to “elevate” American art song to perceived European standards results from inconsistencies in training, lack of historical investigation, and neglect of composer’s specifications.

Despite its many issues of historic depiction, performance practice, and delivery of text, there is room to include regional Southern accents in professional vocal music. The Southern accent as exhibited in the vocal arts should not be viewed as lower class, nor reserved for secular music. As experienced with performance of Kenneth Frazelle’s *Appalachian Songbooks I & II*, and Doug Borwick’s *Southern Comfort*, contemporary American art song and the works that helped define the genre permit and often specify the use of regional dialects. Similar to Southern Renaissance literature of Faulkner and O’Connor, the regional Southern accent should be considered as a means for more authenticity when expressing texts representing culture, colloquialisms, and Southern philosophy. The vocal arts—whether classical, musical theatre, or opera—can benefit from the inclusion of regional Southern dialects, and for that matter, all dialects when originating from a legitimate and thoroughly researched approach.

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APPENDIX A

IPA TRANSCRIPTIONS OF *APPALACHIAN SONGBOOKS*

Charmin' Birdy¹⁷⁷

All around the mountain Charmin' Birdy.
 [ɔl ə 'raʊn ðə 'maʊn ʔn 'tʃɑ:ɹ̩ mən 'bɜ:ɹ̩ di]

All around the mountain runnin' free.
 [ɔl ə 'raʊn ðə 'maʊn ʔn 'ɹ̩n ɪn fri]

If I never ever see you again
 [ɪf a 'ne vəl 'ε vəl si ju ə 'ɡɹ̩n]

Won't you please remember me?
 [wɔʊntʃu pliz rɪ 'mɛm bəɹ mi]

Thought I saw you comin' through the garden.
 [θɔt a sɑ jɜ 'kɹ̩ mən θɹu ðə ɡɑ diŋ]

Happy just to meet you once again.
 [hɑ pi dʒʌs tɹ mit ju wɛnts ə 'ɡɹ̩n]

Heard your jingle jangle pretty girl dance.
 [hɜ:ɹ̩d jɜ:ɹ̩ 'dʒɹ̩ŋ ɡəl 'dʒɛŋ ɡəl 'prɪ di ɡɜ:ɹ̩l dænts]

or was it only the wind?
 [ɔɹ wɹz ɪt ɔʊn 'li ðə wɹnd]

¹⁷⁷ For schwas in ending syllables *again* and *garden*, I sang a mixture of [ɹ̩] and [ε] on the recording. It is notated in IPA as [ɹ̩] due to the direction of dialect I aimed to take the vowel.

The Cuckoo¹⁷⁸

The cuckoo is a pretty bird, she sings as she flies.
[ðə 'ku ku ɪz ə 'pri di bɜːdʒi sɪŋz əz ʃi fla:z]

She brings us sweet tidings and tells us no lies.
[ʃi brɪŋz əs swɪt 'ta: dɪŋz æn telz əs no læ:z]

She sucks all the pretty flowers to keep her voice clear.
[ʃi sʌks əl ðə prɪdi 'fla wɜːz tə kip hɜː vɔɪs klɪə]

She never says cuckoo 'til summer is near.
[ʃi 'neɪvɜː sɛz 'ku ku tɪl sʌmɜː ɪz niə]

I once loved a young man as dear as my life
[a wɒns lʌvd e jʌŋ mæn æz diə æz ma: laɪf]

and he made me a promise to make me his wife.
[ænd hi meɪd mi ə 'pɹɒmɪs tə meɪk mi hɪz waɪf]

Now my children are hungry and cryin' for bread.
[nəʊ ma 'tʃɪldrən əɹ hʌŋgri æn 'kraɪn fɔː brɛd]

My husband is off drinkin' and I wish I was dead.
[ma 'hʌzbænd ɪz ɔf 'drɪŋkɪn ænd ə wɪʃ ə wɒz dɛd]

Come all you young maidens take warning by me.
[kʌm əl ju jʌŋ 'meɪdənz teɪk 'wɔːnɪŋ ba: mi]

Never place your affections on a willow tree.
[neɪvə pleɪs jɔː ə'fekʃənz ɒn ə 'wɪləʊ tiː]

The leaves will wither and the roots will run dry.
[ðə livz wɪl 'wɪðə æn ðə ruːts wɪl rʌn draɪ]

My true love has forsaken me and I don't know why.
[ma: tru lʌv hæz fɔːsɪkən mi ænd ə dʌʊn? noʊ waɪ]

The grave will consume you and turn you to dust.
[ðə greɪv wɪl kɒnsjuːm ju ænd tɜːn ju tə dʌst]

Not a man in a hundred a poor girl can trust.

¹⁷⁸ The [a:] indicates a slight squeezing of the vowel. Rather than the more frequently used [aɪ], my transcription indicates a more relaxed diphthong.

[nɒt ʌ məen in ʌ hʌndrəd ʌ pɔː gæːl kɪn tʌst]

They'll hug you, they'll kiss you, they'll tell you more lies
[ðeɪl hʌg ju ðeɪl kɪs ju ðeɪl tel jə mɔː lɑːz]

than the sand on the sea shore and stars in the skies.
[ðæn ðə sænd ɔn ðə si ʃɔː æn stɑːz ɪn ðə skaːz]

The cuckoo is a pretty bird she tells me no lies.
[ðə 'ku ku ɪz ʌ 'prɪ di bɜːd ʃi telz mi no lɑːz]

Barbra Allen

'Twas in the merry month of May
[twɒz ɪn ðə 'mɛɪ mʌnθ əv meɪ]

The green buds were a-swellin'
[ðə ɡrɪn bʌdz wɜːɹ ʌ 'swɛlɪn]

Sweet William on his deathbed lay
[swiːt 'wɪljəm ɒn hɪz 'deθ bɛd leɪ]

For the love of Barbra Allen.
[fɔː ðə lʌv ɒv 'bɑːbrə ˈælən]

O Mother come and make my bed
[oː mʌðə kʌm ænd meɪk maɪ bɛd]

come make it soft and narrow
[kʌm meɪk ɪt sɔft æn 'næroʊ]

for Sweet William died today
[fɔː swiːt 'wɪljəm diːd tə'deɪ]

and I will die tomorrow.
[ænd aː wɪl daɪ tə'mɔːroʊ]

At William's grave there sprung a rose
[æt 'wɪljəmz ɡreɪv ðeɪ sprʌŋ ʌ roʊz]

from Barbra's grave a briar.
[frʌm 'bɑːbrəz ɡreɪv ʌ braɪə]

They twined and tied a lover's knot
[ðeɪ twaɪnd æn taɪd ʌ 'lʌvəz nɒt]

for all true lovers to admire.
[fɔː ɔl truː lʌvəz tu æd'maɪə]

Our Good Man-

The first night I came home as drunk as I could be
[ðɜː fɜːɹst na:t a: keɪm hoʊm æ:z dʒʌŋk ɪz a: kʊ:d bi]

I found a horse in the stable where my horse ort to be.
[a: faʊ:nd ʌ hoʊs ɪn ðə 'steɪ bəl we:ɹ ma: hoʊs ɔ:t tə bi]

Come here my little wife baby explain this thing to me.
[kʌm hiu ma: 'li dəl waɪ:f 'beɪ bi eks 'pleɪ:n ðɪs θɪŋ tə mi]

How come a horse in the stable where my horse ort to be?
[haʊ: kʌm ʌ hoʊs ɪn ðə 'steɪ bəl we:ɹ ma: hoʊs ɔ:t tə bi]

O you blind fool you crazy fool can't you never see?
[ou ju blaɪnd fu:l ju 'kɹeɪ zi fu:l kɑ:ntʃə 'ne vəl si]

It's nothin' but a milk cow where your horse ort to be.
[ɪts 'nʌ θɪn bʌt ʌ mɪlk kaʊ we:ɹ jɔ:l hoʊs ɔ:t tə bi]

I've rambled this wide world over a thousand miles or more,
[a:v 'ja:m bæld ðɪs wa:d wɜ:ɹld 'ou vɜ:ɹ ʌ 'θaʊ: zɪnd ma:lz ɔ: mo:]

but a saddle on a milk cow I never saw before.
[bʌt ʌ 'sa: dəl ɔ:n ʌ mɪlk kaʊ a: 'ne vəl sɔ: brɪ fɔ:l]

The next night I came home as drunk as I could be
[ðɜː nekst na:t a: keɪm hoʊm æ:z dʒʌŋk ɪz a: kʊ:d bi]

I found a coat hangin' on the rack where my coat ort to be.
[a: faʊ:nd ʌ kəʊt 'heɪŋ ɪn ɔ:n ðə ræk we:ɹ ma: kəʊt ɔ:t tə bi]

Come here my little wife baby explain this thing to me.
[kʌm hiu ma: 'li dəl waɪ:f 'beɪ bi eks 'pleɪ:n ðɪs θɪŋ tə mi]

How come a coat on the coat rack where my coat ort to be?
[haʊ: kʌm ʌ kəʊt ɔ:n ðə 'kəʊt ræk we:ɹ ma: kəʊt ɔ:t tə bi]

O you blind fool you crazy fool can't you never see?
[ou ju blaɪnd fu:l ju 'kɹeɪ zi fu:l kɑ:ntʃə 'ne vəl si]

It's nothin' but a bed quilt you granted it to me.
[ɪts 'nʌ θɪn bʌt ʌ bed kwɪlt jə 'grɑ:n təd ɪt tə mi]

I've rambled this wide world over a thousand miles or more,

[a:v 'ʝa:m beld ðɪs wa:d wɜːld 'ou vɜːl ʌ 'θaʊ: zɪnd ma:lz ɔː moʊ]

but pockets on a bed quilt I never saw before.
[bʌt 'pɔ: kɪts ɔ:n ʌ be:d kwɪlt a: 'ne vɜːl sɔ: bɪ fɔː]

The third night I came home as drunk as I could be
[ðɜ: θɜːd na:t a: keɪm hoʊm æ:z dʒʌŋk ɪz a: kʊd bi]

I found a head lying on the pillow where my head ort to be.
[a: faʊ:nd ʌ hed leɪ:n ɔ:n ðʌ 'pɪl ʌ we:ɪ ma: he:d ɔːt tə bi]

Come here my little wife baby explain this thing to me.
[kʌm hiː ma: 'lɪ dəl waɪ:f 'beɪ bi eks 'pleɪ:n ðɪs θɪŋ tə mi]

How come a head on the pillow where my head ort to be?
[haʊ: kʌm ʌ hed ɔ:n ðə 'pɪl ʌ we:ɪ ma: he:d ɔːt tə bi]

O you blind fool you crazy fool can't you never see?
[ou ju blaɪnd ful ju 'kɪeɪ zi ful kɑntʃə 'ne vɜːl si]

It's nothin' but a cabbage head you granted it to me.
[ɪts 'nʌ θɪn bʌt ʌ 'kæb ɪdʒ hed jə 'grɑ:n təd ɪt tə mi]

I've rambled this wide world over a thousand miles or more,
[a:v 'ʝa:m beld ðɪs wa:d wɜːld 'ou vɜːl ʌ 'θaʊ: zɪnd ma:lz ɔː moʊ]

but a moustache on a cabbage head I never saw before!
[bʌt ʌ 'mʌ stæ:ʃ ɔ:n ʌ 'kæb ɪdʒ hed a: 'ne vɜːl sɔ: bɪ fɔː]

Groundhog

Shoulder up your gun and whistle for your dog.
[ˈʃɒldə ʌp jɜːr ɡʌn ænd wɪsəl fɜːr jɜːr dɒɡ]

Goin' to the woods to catch a groundhog. Ol' groundhog.
[ˈɡoʊn tə ðə wɜːdz tə kætʃ ə ɡraʊnd heʊɡ ol' ɡraʊnd heʊɡ]

Groundhog in the berry patch, he run into a log.
[ˈɡraʊnd heʊɡ ɪn ðə ˈbɛrɪ pætʃ hi rʌn ɪn tu ə lɔːɡ]

Suppertime come we'll have a groundhog. Ol' groundhog.
[ˈsʌp ɹɜːr taɪm kʌm wɪl hæv ə ɡraʊnd heʊɡ ol' ɡraʊnd heʊɡ]

Here comes Fergus with a forty foot pole.
[hɪr kʌmz fɜːrgəs wɪð ə fɔːti fut poʊl]

To run that groundhog out of his hole. Ol' groundhog.
[tə rʌn ðæt ˈɡraʊnd heʊɡ aʊt ʌv hɪz hoʊl ol' ɡraʊnd heʊɡ]

Skin that groundhog, save his hide.
[skɪn ðæt ˈɡraʊnd hɔːɡ seɪv hɪz haɪd]

Makes the best shoestring I ever tied. Ol' groundhog.
[meɪks ðə bɛst ˈʃu strɪŋ aɪ ɛvɪr taɪd ol' ɡraʊnd heʊɡ]

Birdy was screamin' and birdy she cried.
[ˈbɜːr di wəz skriːmɪŋ ænd ˈbɜːr di ʃi kraɪd]

She loves her groundhog stewed and fried. Ol' groundhog.
[ʃi lʌvz hɜːr ˈɡraʊnd hɔːɡ stjuːd ænd fraɪd ol' ɡraʊnd heʊɡ]

Yonder comes Clarence with a snigger and a grin.
[jʌnə dɜːr kʌmz klɛrɪnts wɪθ ə ˈsnɪgə ænd ə ɡrɪn]

Groundhog gravy all over his chin. Ol' groundhog!
[ˈɡraʊnd heʊɡ ˈɡreɪ vi əl ˈoʊ vɜːr hɪz tʃɪn ol' ɡraʊnd heʊɡ]

Billy Boy

Oh, where have you been, my Billy Billy boy,
[ou we:ɹ hæv jə bi:n ma: 'bi li 'bi li bɔɪ]

oh, where have you been, my charmin' Billy?
[ou we:ɹ hæv jə bi:n ma: 'tʃɑ:mɪn 'bi li]

I've been to find a wife to brighten up my life
[a:v bi:n tə fa:nd ʌ wa:f tə braɪ ʔn ʌp ma: la:f]

she's a young thing and won't leave her mother. No.
[ʃiz ə jʌŋ θɪŋ ænd wɒnt liv həɹ mʌðə nɒʊ]

Can she make a cherry pie, my Billy Billy boy,
[kæn ʃi meɪk ʌ 'tʃɛ:ɹi pa:] (IPA transcription same as above)

can she make a cherry pie, my charmin' Billy?
[kæn ʃi meɪk ʌ 'tʃɛ:ɹi pa: ma: 'tʃɑ:mɪn 'bi li]

She can bake a cherry pie quick as you can blink an eye
[ʃi kæn beɪk ʌ 'tʃɛ:ri pa: kwɪk əz ju kæn blɪnk ən a:]

she's a young thing and won't leave her mother. No.
[ʃiz ə jʌŋ θɪŋ ænd wɒnt liv həɹ mʌðə nɒʊ]

Can she make a feather bed, my Billy Billy boy,
[kæn ʃi meɪk ʌ 'feð ə bed ma: 'bi li 'bi li bɔɪ]

can she make a feather bed, my charmin' Billy?
[kæn ʃi meɪk ʌ 'feð ə bed ma: 'tʃɑ:mɪn 'bi li]

She can make a feather bed and a pillow for my head
[ʃi kæn meɪk ʌ 'feð ə bed ænd ʌ 'pɪ ləʊ fɜ: ma: hed]

she's a young thing and won't leave her mother. No.
[ʃiz ə jʌŋ θɪŋ ænd wɒnt liv həɹ mʌðə nɒʊ]

How old is she my Billy Billy boy?
[haʊ: ould ɪz ʃi ma: 'bi li 'bi li bɔɪ]

How old is she my charmin' Billy?
[haʊ: ould ɪz ʃi ma: 'tʃɑ:mɪn 'bi li]

Twice six twice seven twice twenty and eleven,

[twais sɪks twais 'sɛ:vən twais 'twɛn ti ænd ə'le:vən]

she's a young thing and won't leave her mother. No.
[ʃiz ə jʌŋ θɪŋ ænd wɒnt liv hə mʌðə nou]

Will you write me a song, my Billy Billy boy?
[wɪl jə raɪt mi e sɔŋ mə: 'bɪ li 'bɪ li bɔɪ]

Will you write me a song, my sweet, sweet Billy?
[wɪl jə raɪt mi e sɔŋ mə: swɪt swɪt 'bɪ li]

Will you write me a song and sing it when I'm gone?
[wɪl jə raɪt mi e sɔŋ ænd sɪŋ ɪt wɛn a:m gɔ:n]

La da da da
[la da da da]

In East Virginny

I was born in East Virginny. North Car'lina is my home.
[a: wʌz bɔ:n ɪn ɪst vɜ:ni 'dʒɪni nɔ:θ keɪ 'la:nʌ ɪz ma: hoʊm]

There I saw a fair young lady. But her name I did not know.
[ðeɪ a: sɔ ʌ feɪr jʌŋ 'leɪdi bʌt hɜ: neɪm a: dɪd nɔt noʊ]

Her hair was the darkest color. And her cheeks were ruby red.
[hɜ: heɪr wʌz ðə 'dɑ:kəst kʌlə: ənd hɜ: tʃi:kz wɜ: 'ru:bi red]

On her breast she wore white lilies. Oh the tears for her I shed.
[ɔn hɜ: brɛst ʃi wɔ: wa:t 'li:lɪz oʊ ðə ti:z fɔ: hɜ: a: ʃɛd]

Now I'm alone on some dark ocean where the sun will never shine
[naʊ a:m ə'ləʊn ɔn sʌm dɑ:k 'oʊʃən wɜ: ðə sʌn wɪl 'ne:və ʃaɪn]

'cause you have another darling and I know you'll never be mine.
[kɔ:z ju hæv ə'nʌðə 'dɑ:lɪŋ ənd a: noʊ ju:l 'ne:və bi maɪn]

Pretty Saro

I came to this country in eighteen forty-nine.
[a: keɪm tə ðɪs 'kʌn tʃi ɪn eɪ'tiŋ fɔ:ti na:n]

I saw many lovers, but never saw mine.
[a: sɔ: 'me ni 'ləvəz bʌt 'neɪ vɔ: sɔ: ma:n]

I looked all around me and saw I was alone
[a: lʊkt ɔ:l ə'raʊnd mi ænd sɔ a: wɔz ə'ləʊn]

and me a poor stranger a long way from home.
[ænd mi ə pʊə 'streɪn dʒə ə lɔ:ŋ weɪ frʌm hoʊm]

I wish I was a little dove and had wings to fly
[a: wɪʃ a: wɔz e 'lɪ dɒl dʌv ænd hæd wɪŋz tə flaɪ]

far across the ocean through dark clouds and sky.
[fɑ ə 'krɒs ðɪ 'oʊən θru dɑ:k klaʊdz ænd skaɪ]

In her lily white arms all night I would lay
[ɪn hɜ: 'lɪ li wa:t ɑ:mz ɔ:l na:t a: wʊd leɪ]

'til the sun comes up and brings in the day.
['tɪl ðə sʌn kʌmz ʌp ænd brɪŋz ɪn ðə deɪ]

Farewell my father and my sweet mother too.
[fɛ:ɹ 'weɪl ma: fɑðə: ænd ma: swi:t mʌðə: tu]

I'm goin' to ramble this whole world through.
[a:m 'gou ɪn tə 'ræ:m bəl ðɪs hoʊl wɜ:ld θru]

And when I get tired I'll sit down and cry
[ænd wɪn a: ɡɪt 'ta: jɜ:d a:l sɪt daʊn ænd kraɪ]

and think on pretty Saro with tears in my eyes.
[ænd θɪŋk ɒn 'prɪ di 'sɑ:rou wɪð ti:z ɪn ma: a:z]

APPENDIX B

IPA TRANSCRIPTIONS OF *SOUTHERN COMFORT*

Southern Fiction

Summer of '52- beans dried up in the fields,
[ˈsʌ məʃ ʌv ˈfɪ fti tu binz dɹɑ:d ʌp ɪn ðə fildz]

rivers ran to a trickle.
[ˈɹɪ vəɹz ɹæn tu ə ˈtɹɪ kəl]

We stayed inside most of the day
[wi steɪd ɪn ˈsa:d moʊst ʌv ðə deɪ]

slept on the porch at night.
[slɛpt ɒn ðə pɔ:tʃ ət naɪt]

Ben was writing a novel and swore more than I ever remembered
[bɛn wʌz ˈɹaɪ tɪŋ ʌ ˈnɒ vəl ænd swɔɹ mɔɹ ðæn a: ˈɛv ər ɹɪ ˈmɛm bərd]

We washed it down with bourbon.
[wi wɔʃt ɪt daʊn wɪθ bɔ:rbən]

'Cross the road a hound dog turned up his legs and died
[ˈkɹɒs ðə ɹoʊd ʌ haʊndɔg tɜ:nd ʌp hɪz lɛgz ən daɪd]

We had to look at him till he stank, then Ben dragged him off.
[wi hʌd tə lʊk ət hɪm tɪl hi steɪŋk ðɛn bɛn dɹægd hɪm ɔf]

Sometimes I look over there and see him still.
[sʌm ˈta:mz a: lʊk oʊvə ðe:ɹ ænd si hɪm stɪl]

'was so hot Mama wore out a handkerchief
[wʌz sɔʊ hɒt mʌ mə wɔɹ ɔʊt ə ˈhæŋ kəɹ tʃɪf]

wiping off the sweat.
[waɪ pɪŋ ɔf ðə swet]

must have been hot enough between her breasts to suffocate.
[mʌst hʌv bɪn hɒt ɪ ˈnʌf bɪ ˈtwɪn hɜ:ɹ brɛsts tu ˈsʌ fə keɪt]

Even the bugs went crazy buzzing the screen at night
[i ˈvɪn ðə blɜgz wɛnt ˈkɹæɪ zi bʌ zɪŋ ðə skuɪn æt na:t]

screaming for light when they meant water.
[ˈskɹɪ mɪŋ fɔɹ laɪt wɛn ðeɪ mənt ˈwɔ tə]

Put on a hat if you're going out. Draw the front shades. Take a nap after lunch.

[pʊt ən ʌ hət ɪf jɔː gʊv ɪŋ aʊt dɪə ðə fʌnt ʃeɪdz teɪk ʌ næp æftə ɪnt]

We survived by these means but memories burned out.
[wi sɜːv aɪvd baː ðɪz miːnz bʌt 'mɛməɪz bɜːnd aʊt]

Everything 'bout the summer of '52 asks for air.
['ɛvri θɪŋ baʊt ðə 'sʌmə ʌv 'fɪfti tu æskz fɔː eɪ]

Love

While the tennis match drones on
[waɪl ðə 'tenɪs mætʃ dɹoʊnz ɔn]

in the wet heat of North Carolina,
[ɪn ðə wet hit ʌv nɔθ kæ ɹə 'la: nə]

two flies make love inside the secrets of a Coca Cola can.
[tu fla:z meɪk lʌv ɪn 'sa:d ðə 'si kɹets ʌv ə 'kou kə 'kou lə kæ:n]

Pause that refreshes!
[pɑ:z ðæt ɪ 'fɹɛʃɪz]

Let the sun shine, let the sweat pop,
[let ðə sʌn ʃaɪn let ðə swet pɒp]

let the players grunt and fall,
[let ðə 'ple: jəz grʌnt ænd fɔl]

but life goes on in vintage syrup,
[bʌt la:f goʊz ɔn ɪn 'vɪn tɪdʒ 'sɪ rʌp]

Someone's leftovers too good to miss,
['sʌm wʌnz left ʌʊvəz tu gu:d tə mɪs]

and the flies swoon, rubbing their legs in ecstasy.
[ænd ðə fla:z swu:n 'ɹʌ bɪŋ ðeɪ legz ɪn 'ek stə si]

Our happy hour!
[aʊ 'hæ pi aʊ]

Drink up and come inside my 12 oz. can with me,
[dɪŋk ʌp ænd kʌm ɪn 'saɪd ma: 'twelv aʊnts ka:n wɪθ mi]

and let's make love. The score is oh and oh
[ænd lets meɪk lʌv ðə skɔɪ ɪz oʊ ænd oʊ]

Sisters

In Southern towns I know
[ɪn 'sʌ ðɜːn taʊnz aɪ nou]

unmarried sisters live together
[ʌn 'mɛːɪd 'sɪ stəz lɪv tə 'ge ðə]

in the fam'ly home. They nurse Mother
[ɪn ðə 'fɑːm lɪ hoʊm ðeɪ nɜːs mʌðɜː]

in long sickness, tend the graves.
[ɪn lɒŋ 'sɪk nəs teɪnd ðə greɪvz]

Marie and Suzanna; Edwina and Rose;
[mə 'ɪi ənd su 'zɛːnə ɛd 'wi nə ənd ɹoʊz]

Therese and Pearl: sisters who played
[tə 'ɪis ənd pɜːl 'sɪ stəz hu pleɪd]

dolls together all their lives and keep
[dɒlz tə 'ge ðə əl ðeɪ lɑːvz ənd ki:p]

them now in the china closet.
[ðem naʊ ɪn ðə 'tʃaːnə 'klozət]

This is the way we entertained when Mother was alive.
[ðɪs ɪs ðə weɪ wi ɛn tɜː 'teɪnd wɛn 'mʌ ðɜː wʌz ə 'laːv]

This is the way we went to church with Poppa.
[ðɪs ɪs ðə weɪ wi wɛnt tə tʃɜːrtʃ wɪθ pɒpə]

This is the way the world was.
[ðɪs ɪs ðə weɪ ðə wɜːld wʌz]

When one has bad dreams,
[wɛn wʌn hæz bæd dɪmz]

it's of the other's dying first.
[ɪts ʌf ði 'ʌ ðɜːz 'daɪ ɪŋ fɜːst]

Each says her prayers and asks to be the first to go
[ɪtʃ seɪz hɜː pɹeɪɹz ənd æskz tə bi ðə fɜːst tu goʊ]

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Immersion

Brothers: A word from Dallas, Texas.
[ˈbrʌ ðɜːz ʌ wɜːd frʌm ˈdælɪs tɛksɪs]

Preacher got his hide fried in the act of saving one for Christ.
[ˈpriːtʃɜː gɒt hɪz haɪd fraɪd ɪn ðɪ ækt ʌf ˈseɪvɪn wʌn fɔː kɹɪːst]

It's enough to make Christians pray twice 'fore turning on a switch
[ɪts ɪˈnʌf tə meɪk ˈkrɪːstjənz pɹeɪ twaɪs fɔː ˈtɜːnɪŋ ɒn ʌ swɪtʃ]

while standing in the bathtub.
[waɪl ˈstændɪŋ ɪn ðə ˈbæθtʌb]

When the preacher of the First Seventh Day Adventist Church
[wɛn ðə ˈpriːtʃɜː ʌv ðə fɜːst ˈse.vənθ deɪ əd ˈvenɪst tʃɜːtʃ]

turned his flock onto Jesus, he felt pretty near exhilarated
[tɜːnd hɪz flɒk ˈɒn tə ˈdʒiːzəs hi felt pɹɪ di niː ɪg ˈziːləreɪtəd]

by the 110 volts of electricity charging up his nerves.
[baɪ ðə wʌn tɛn voʊlts ʌv ɪlekˈtɹɪsəti ˈtʃɑːdʒɪŋ ʌp hɪz nɜːvz]

it happened just that way:
[ɪt ˈhæpənd dʒʌst ðæt weɪ]

he was wading in the water sanctified in the baptismal bubble
[hi wəz ˈweɪdɪŋ ɪn ðə ˈwɔːdɜː ˈsæːŋktəfaɪd ɪn ðə bæptɪz məl bʌbəl]

when he switched on his microphone, to bring the people closer to God.
[wɛn hi swɪtʃt ɒn hɪz ˈmaɪkrəfoʊn tə brɪŋ ðə ˈpiːpəl ˈkloʊsɜː tə gɔːd]

Zap. He was, in a word, electrocuted.
[zæp hi wəz ɪn ə wɜːd ɪ ˈlektrəkjʊtəd]

If it says in the good book
[ɪf ɪt seɪz ɪn ðə gʊd bʊk]

he who loses his life for my sake shall find it,
[hi hu ˈluːz hɪz laɪf fɔː maɪ sæk ʃæl faɪnd ɪt]

The preacher was a real big winner-
[ðə ˈpriːtʃɜː wəz ə riːl bɪg ˈwɪnɜː]

consider the living evidence of an ex-sinner,
[kənˈsɪdɜː ðə ˈlɪvɪŋ ˈeɪvɪdəns əv ən ɛksˈsɪnɜː]

his sins washed away. speechless, too.
[hɪz sɪnz wɔʃt ə 'wei 'spi tʃləs tu]

No one remembers where the flock got off to
[nəʊ wʌn ɪ 'mɛm bəɪz weɪ ðə flɒk gɒt ɔf tu]

or even who pulled out the plug.
[ɔɪ 'i vən hu pʊld aʊt ðə plʌɡ]

The saved were certain of just one thing:
[ðə seɪvd wɜː 'sɜː tən əv dʒʌst wʌn θɪŋ]

to gather together, closer, down front, when the new preacher whispers,
[tə ɡæðə tə 'ge ðə kləʊsə daʊn frʌnt wɛn ðə nju pi tʃə 'wɪs pɜː]

“Jesus, Can you hear me?”
[ˈdʒi zəs kən jə hi mi]

Biography

Originally from Memphis, Nina Cole has been performing and teaching in the Phoenix area since 2011. Most recently, she performed her 2016 “Southern Comfort” recital series in New York City and Brooklyn. She has also performed roles including Despina (*Così fan tutte*) Laretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Bellomy (*The Fantasticks*), and Fleta (*Iolanthe*) and in scenes as Maria (*West Side Story*). In the summer of 2013, Nina sang the title role in *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank* at the Mittelsächsisches Theater in Freiberg, Germany. In addition to opera and musical theatre performances, Nina has been a featured soloist in many choral works. While obtaining her Bachelor’s degree at the University of Mississippi, Nina was a soloist for Ola Gjeilo’s “Tundra” and his premieres of “Liberation of Ellisbell” and “New York I & II”. In 2012, she began work as a professional chorister with the Grammy Award-winning Phoenix Chorale. In 2015, Nina was the featured soprano soloist in Brahms’ *Ein deutsches Requiem*. Winning ‘Best Choral Performance’ on the album *Rachmaninoff: All-Night Vigil*, Nina also shared in the 2015 Grammy Award. She completed the Doctoral of Musical Arts degree in Voice Performance at Arizona State University in 2017, where she was a teaching assistant from 2013-2015.

Her current research focuses on American music, specifically from the South. This interest stemmed from her experience in the contrasting lifestyles of the urban and rural South. Whether it be blues from her hometown in Memphis, country music in Taylor, Mississippi, or East-Tennessee inspired bluegrass, Nina continues to find the music styles of the southern states interesting and unique. Upon listening to Appalachian-themed songs by Crumb, she aimed to discover more classical art songs centered on the South. This led to the songbooks by Kenneth Frazelle and Doug Borwick’s *Southern Comfort*, among others like Jake Heggie’s “Dixie,” Ricky Ian Gordon’s “Daybreak in Alabama,” and by Charles Brown’s “A Song Without Words,” based on the vocal stylings of Blind Willie Johnson. Having performed these songs and others, Nina seeks to promote American opera, art song, and musical theatre repertoire in her performance, as well as in her teaching.