Das Veilchen

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)
German Art song for solo voice (unison choir)
Piano Accompaniment
Public Domain
http://imslp.org/wiki/Das_Veilchen,_K.476_(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus)
Original key: G Major This edition: Eb Major

Analysis

Broad Description/Type
German Art song for solo voice (unison choir)

Background Information
Music composed by Mozart, poem by Goethe, two of the most influential and well-known artists of the Classical era.

“Mozart was born in Salzburg to a musical family. From an early age, the young Mozart showed all the signs of a prodigious musical talent. By the age of 5 he could read and write music, and he would entertain people with his talents on the keyboard. By the age of 6 he was writing his first compositions. Mozart was generally considered to be a rare musical genius, though Mozart said that he was diligent in studying other great composers such as Haydn and Bach.

During his childhood, he would frequently tour various palaces around Europe playing for distinguished guests. Aged 17, he accepted a post as a court musician in Salzburg; although this did not suit him very well, the next few years were a time of prolific composition. In 1781, he moved permanently to Vienna where he stayed for remainder of his life. In Vienna, he became well known and was often in demand as a composer and performer.

However, despite his relative fame and renown he struggled to manage his finances and moved between periods of poverty and prosperity. This difficulty was enhanced when, in 1786, Austria was involved in a war, which led to lower demand for musicians. In 1782, he married against the wishes of his family; he had 6 children but only 2 survived infancy.

The work of Mozart is epic in scope and proportion. There were few branches of music Mozart did not touch. He composed operas, symphonies, concertos, and single pieces for the piano. His work spanned from joyful light-hearted pieces to powerful, challenging compositions that touched the human emotions. In the beginning of his career, Mozart had a powerful ability to learn and remember from the music he heard from others. He was able to incorporate the style and music of people such as Haydn and J.C. Bach. But, as he matured he developed his very own style and interpretations. In turn the music of Mozart very much influenced the early Beethoven.

Mozart was very productive until his untimely death in 1791, aged 35.”
I never lie down at night without reflecting that — young as I am — I may not live to see another day. Mozart


Text Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). German poet, playwright, novelist, scientist, statesman, theatre director, critic, and amateur artist, considered the greatest German literary figure of the modern era.

Ein Veilchen auf der Wiese stand, gebückt in sich und unbekannt; es war ein herzigs Veilchen. Da kam ein' junge Schäferin mit leichtem Schritt und munterm Sinn daher, daher, die Wiese her und sang.

A violet in the meadow stood, bent in itself and unnoticed, it was the sweetest violet. There came along a shepherdess with light footsteps and cheerful mind, from there, from there, the meadow, and sang.

Ach! denkt das Veilchen, wär' ich nur die schönste Blume der Natur, ach, nur ein kleines Weilchen, bis mich das Liebchen abgepflückt und an dem Busen matt gedrückt, ach, nur, ach nur ein Viertelstündchen lang!

Oh! thought the violet, if I were the prettiest flower in nature, Ah!, for just a little while, until the darling plucked me and to her bosom pressed me, Oh, just, only if but a quarter-hour long.

Ach, aber ach! Das Mädchen kam und nicht in acht das Veilchen nahm, ertrat das arme Veilchen. Es sank und starb, und freut' sich noch: und sterb' ich denn, so sterb' ich doch durch sie, durch sie, zu ihren Füßen doch!

But, cruel fate! The maiden came, without a glance or care for him, she trampled down the violet. It sank and died, but happily: and so I die then let me die through her, through her, beneath her feet.
**Elements of Music**

**Form**  The form is through-composed, which means each section of the text is set to different music. This is very important and will affect how the piece should be performed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Harmony</th>
<th>Timbre</th>
<th>Texture</th>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Speculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m. 1-7</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>The piano plays the first tune, which is melodic, stepwise and tuneful.</td>
<td>The meter is 2/4, primarily eighth notes, then dotted-eighth sixteenth, with a rest occurring on the dot.</td>
<td>Stable Eb Major tonic established: I I V I</td>
<td>Piano plays lightly.</td>
<td>Only piano.</td>
<td>Allegretto tempo marking, piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 7-14</td>
<td>Stanza 1a “The Violet”</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Voice and piano.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 14-22</td>
<td>Stanza 1b “The Shepherdess”</td>
<td>In contrast, this melody begins with a descent, then ends with an ascent. Cool opposite!</td>
<td>The voice continues with eighth notes and dotted eighth (rest) sixteenth. The accompaniment begins chordal, quarter notes turn to lightly stepping sixteenths in the piano.</td>
<td>Now in the dominant key of Bb Major.</td>
<td>The voice becomes a little fuller, more confident.</td>
<td>Voice and piano.</td>
<td>Mezzo-piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 22-26</td>
<td>“Piano interlude”</td>
<td>The piano takes the melody, soaring high in the right hand.</td>
<td>All sixteenths.</td>
<td>V I in Bb.</td>
<td>Bright.</td>
<td>Alberti Bass in the left hand.</td>
<td>Mezzo-forte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 27-34</td>
<td>Stanza 2a “The Violet Speaks”</td>
<td>The melody becomes more angular and full of skips.</td>
<td>More even eighth notes in the voice.</td>
<td>Key of eb minor! (parallel minor)</td>
<td>The voice switches to a more dark tone.</td>
<td>The style of an Italian aria.</td>
<td>Forte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 34-42</td>
<td>Stanza 2b</td>
<td>A variant of the opening melody.</td>
<td>The dotted eighth sixteenth returns, eventually slowing to eighths, quarters, half and finally and full measure rest!</td>
<td>Gb Major, but a lot of V dominant.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Alberti bass returns.</td>
<td>Forte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 42-50</td>
<td>Stanza 3a “Recitative”</td>
<td>The melody is static, a recitative, but builds to the final foot fall.</td>
<td>Rhythm performed out of tempo in a recitative style.</td>
<td>Cb Major</td>
<td>The vocal tone builds in intensity.</td>
<td>Recitative.</td>
<td>Piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 50-59</td>
<td>Stanza 3b “Stringendo”</td>
<td>The melody moves in a chromatic descent as the violet sinks and dies, but then dramatically rises to tonic.</td>
<td>The dotted eight sixteenth returns, turning into dotted quarter eighth.</td>
<td>Chromatic return to Eb Major.</td>
<td>Full and supported.</td>
<td>Voice and piano equal again.</td>
<td>Stringendo (getting faster)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. 60-64</td>
<td>“Coda”</td>
<td>A return of the opening theme.</td>
<td>A return of the opening theme.</td>
<td>V7 arpeggio piano, resolved</td>
<td>Voice and piano.</td>
<td>A piacere</td>
<td>Mozart added this coda to the original poem, giving the singer and listener some resolution that Goethe did not!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Heart
The heart of Mozart’s song *Das Veilchen* is the through-composed form (including thematic melodies, changing tempo, major/minor key relationships, shift of vocal registers, recitative and varied accompaniment) that captures the emotional vulnerability of the title character represented in the text.

Music Selection
No one can deny that Mozart is one of the most famous composers of all times; unfortunately, there just isn’t much repertoire available for younger choirs to perform. (Three Nocturnes, SAB, exception.) *Das Veilchen* is a gem. Not only is it musically interesting and satisfying to sing, the piece has an important role in music history. It is the only setting of a Goethe poem by Mozart, and Mozart strays away from a typical strophic form and opts for through-composition. This could be the start of the transition to the German Lied of the Romantic Era.

Brainstorming Results

**Reasons To Perform**
- It’s Mozart!
- The melody is charming, even though the story is a bit silly/sad.
- Features a good accompanist.

**Things to teach with this song**
- Through-composed form
- German text
- Develop vocal color changes through mid-high register
- Major and Minor
- Use of accidentals as a departure from tonic
- Melodic and rhythmic motif
- What is a grace note?
- Dynamic contrasts dictated by text
- Telling the story of the poetry

**Assumed Prior Knowledge (6th Grade Choir)**
- Strophic
- What are accidentals “on purposefuls”
- Identifying basic Major key signatures: C, G, D, F
- Basic phrase structure
- Basic vowel sounds (ah, eh, ee, oh, oo)

**The Teaching Plan**

*Introducing the piece*
Be up front with the idea of 7th Grade is a time to take positive risks, and allowing ourselves to be a little vulnerable. Present the choir with a “Welcome Back To School” letter, written completely in IPA. Have them struggle with deciphering the meaning. Hand out the score of *Das Veilchen*. Have them struggle with deciphering the meaning. Listen to the song without knowing the meaning of the text. Ask them to journal about how they felt not knowing the meaning. This is a sort of “Leap then Look” strategy. Is that helpful or dangerous?

**NTS** (Note to self): What is the friction point? The song is in German! What is the instant pull? It’s Mozart (familiar, famous).
**Skill Outcome**

Students will apply basic IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols to a variety of texts so that they can produce uniform vowel sounds/consonants and evaluate accurate pronunciation.


**Strategies**

1. **IPA Welcome Back to School Letter #Who’sAfraidOfIPA?**
   a. Students read the letter in IPA to gain exposure/review prior learning
   b. IPA Words of the Day

2. **IPA Chart in their folder**
   a. Students practice with basic vowels: a e i o u
   b. Add consonants... “obvious and not so obvious”
   c. Include symbols needed for sounds specific to German
   d. Ask student leaders lead warm-ups changing combinations using the chart

3. **Name Game, IPA Bingo**
   a. Students write their names in IPA code
   b. Students play IPA Bingo (they can make their own cards to practice)
   c. The prize: to lead the group in some way of their choosing

4. **Student Small Group Performance**
   a. Students read select phrases of the German text in IPA; partner critique
   b. Students write select phrases of the German text in IPA; partner critique
   c. Students sing select phrases of the German text in IPA (groups or solo?)

5. **Secret IPA Pen Pals**
   a. Round 1: Students will be assigned another student, writing given phrases or words in IPA.

**Assessment**

1. **Informal formative assessments of all strategies**
   a. Student leaders evaluate the group.
   b. Student self-evaluation (Thumbs up/thumbs down. Hidden Hands 5 4 3 2 1. Vote/Defend)
   c. The teacher will observe the students perform the strategies in large and small groups.

2. **Quiz: What’s Wrong?**
   a. Students will find the incorrectly printed IPA in the text and make corrections.
   b. Students will assess the incorrectly pronounced words from the text and make corrections.

3. **Secret IPA Pen Pals**
   a. Round 2: Students may choose their own phrases to write.
   b. They assess each by correctly decoding.

4. **Connection with other songs in the folder (transfer of knowledge)**
   a. iPad Recording Partners
   b. Students record themselves singing the text.
   c. Students must evaluate themselves with the rubric and their partner.
   d. Teacher evaluation in individual lessons.
**Knowledge Outcome**

Through score analysis, students will recognize “through-composed” as a musical form and identify compositional devices used by the composer. *(National Music Standard 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.)*

*NTS (Note to self) Assumes prior knowledge learned in 6th grade: Strophic, accidentals and basic phrase structure.

**Strategies**

1. **BRAINSTORM EXPERT NOTICER** *(™Margaret Jenks) ANALYSIS WORD WALL*
   a. Review: Strophic, Verse/Refrain, phrase, key signature, accidentals (on purposefuls), major/minor relationships
   c. Compare and contrast this to other music in their folder… i.e. *The Swallow* is strophic, it stays in the same key, there is a unifying motif, etc…

2. **What Do You Hear? (Aural Analysis)**
   a. Listen to the song performed and raise your hand when you hear a new section. Keep track of how many different sections you hear. Write on the board for future reference.
   b. Play the recording with iTunes, show the time played on the smart board. Listen again and raise your hand when you hear a different section. Mark the time of each section on the score.
   c. Listen again and identify any musical material that you have heard before.
   d. Do we need to change the number of sections of the song? Combine? Break apart?

3. **What Do You See? (Visual Analysis)**
   a. Students are provided the score.
   b. They will be asked to mark the phrases and the sections. Remember the number of sections. (They have the tools of counting 4 and 8 measures for phrase lengths, using rests as clues, looking for accidentals (on-purposefuls) as a sign for a key change.) Look for new thematic material.

4. **Label Each Section Through Composed Chart (Categorize)**
   a. The choir must label each section for quick reference.
   b. Vocabulary will include musical terms and speculative/interpretive terms.

5. **Through-Composed Song Hunt**
   a. HOMEWORK: challenge students to find one song on their iPod playlist that is through-composed
   b. *Why is this so difficult?* (It’s an Art Form. It challenges our brains and hearts to have to hear things new and different. It tells a story…)

6. **Why Do Composers Use Through-Composition?**
   a. *Commissioned work by Heidi Joosten Fall 2015*
   b. Interview with the composer!

**Assessment**

1. **Compare and Contrast**
   a. Students pair and share reading/singing the text in German/English and create “movement” to illustrate the different sections of the music; intentions of the text.
b. A different setting of Das Veilchen by another composer through YouTube.
   i. strophic; Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814)
   ii. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hW5BH1_iU5S0
   iii. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivYhiNOa4_4
   iv. Journal Questions

2. Connection with other songs in the folder (transfer of knowledge)
   a. Analyze the other songs in our folder and discover another song that is
      “through-composed”. (Commissioned work by Heidi Joosten Fall 2015) The
      Nodolf Incident

3. Written quiz/Aural Quiz
   a. Vocabulary
   b. Label the sections
   c. Follow up to Word Wall (apply these terms)

Affective Outcome
Students will explore the themes of vulnerability and risk taking and discover how this relates to
their personal experience and musical performance. Revised National Music Standard #10:
Connecting: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Strategies
1. Setting the Tone
   a. Intriguing posters for thought.
   b. Establish CHOIR SAFETY ZONE!

2. Discussion: Definitions and Connotations
   a. What does it mean to be vulnerable? Is this negative or positive or both?
      i. ADJECTIVE susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm
   b. What does it mean to be a risk taker? Is this negative or positive or both?
      i. NOUN a situation involving exposure to danger.
      ii. VERB expose (someone or something valued) to danger, harm, or loss.
   c. Is this relevant to 7th Grade Choir?

3. Journal
   a. Have you ever felt totally vulnerable or taken a great risk? In a situation? To
      another person/other people? How did you react and why? How did this
      situation change you?
   b. Should we fear vulnerability or embrace it? Should we reward risk-takers or
      punish them?
   c. Private or shared?
   d. What do you know about Mozart’s life? Was he a risk-taker? Consider this
      quote: I never lie down at night without reflecting that-young as I am-I may not
      live to see another day. Explore the context

4. Pushing The Boundaries
   a. Mini-retreat activities that require students to explore their boundaries
   b. Student leaders, followers (trust walk, trust sing)
   c. Student interpretive charades or tell us what you think
   d. Create your own violet, coloring it to represent your interests.
Assessment

1. Class Discussion
   a. Before and after...teacher observations of students’ willingness to fully participate and contribute, listen

2. Self Reflections and Journal Entries
   a. Who describes themselves as vulnerable? As a risk taker?
   b. Take note of the positive risks that singers take in rehearsal. Singing solo? Classroom discussion?
   d. Take note of the times when we might be willing to make ourselves more vulnerable in rehearsal. Better listening? Open to critique?

4. Connection with other aspects of their middle school life (transfer of knowledge)
   a. 7th Grade Team Meetings
   b. Coaches and Advisors of Activities
   c. Crossover journal

Ten Ways To Take Out The Piece
1. The German Art Song
2. Take out Das Veilchen written in IPA.
3. Mozart
4. Picture of a violet...a real violet
5. Text by the poet Goethe.
6. Ask a student before hand to perform song charades.
7. Through-composed.
8. Play the you-tube or a recording.
9. Classical era song
10. The song written when George Washington was still alive.