SELECTION PROCEDURES RELATING TO
AUSTRALIAN VOCAL REPERTOIRE FOR
MID-adolescent HSC performers

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requirements for the degree of
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I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

Signed: Wendy Dixon............................................................................................

Date: 11/03/2007.................................................................................................
Abstract

This thesis documents an investigation of the selection procedures relating to Australian vocal repertoire for mid-adolescent and Higher School Certificate (New South Wales) performers, as used by private singing teachers, school music teachers and singing students. It explores the similarities and differences in the criteria employed in these selections. Semi-structured interviews were the source of data and were conducted with participants from these three categories as well as two composers.

The participants evinced highly disparate views. The private singing teachers believed that repertoire should be dictated by the technical ability and physiological constraints of mid-adolescent students and that their role in selecting repertoire was related to the long term vocal growth of each individual. They felt that the school music teachers vetted their repertoire choices with no useful explanation of their reasoning, while the school music teachers noted that students frequently presented repertoire that was too difficult or that was not readily communicated with the audience. The ability of mid-adolescent singers to communicate with and engage an audience was the prime concern of the school music teachers. The students wanted to impress their examiners and believed that infrequently heard repertoire was the best choice, though this was not endorsed by the teachers. There was a perception that the students would perform at their best when they chose repertoire to which they could relate emotionally.

Many private singing teachers and school music teachers are not aware of the very broad range of contemporary Australian music and its divergent characteristics. However, there is a shortage of appropriate Australian repertoire that addresses the physiological and emotional needs of mid-adolescent singers.
Acknowledgments

I express my thanks to the students and school music teachers with whom I was working before commencing this study. The comments they made concerning the HSC music performance examination was the catalyst for my initial enquiries.

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