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# Sing Solo Pirate: Songs in the Key of Arrr! A Literature Guide for the Singer and Vocal Pedagogue

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SING SOLO PIRATE: SONGS IN THE KEY OF *ARRR!*  
A LITERATURE GUIDE FOR THE SINGER AND VOCAL PEDAGOGUE

by

Michael S. Tully

A DOCTORAL DOCUMENT

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SING SOLO PIRATE: SONGS IN THE KEY OF *ARRR!*  
A LITERATURE GUIDE FOR THE SINGER AND VOCAL PEDAGOGUE

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University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisor: William Shomos

Pirates have always been mysterious figures. They came out of nowhere, attacked their victims, plundered their goods, and vanished. Reason tells us that pirates were no more than common criminals, but over the centuries, history has come to portray them as romantic and even heroic figures. This stereotype of piracy has long been a fascination of authors, poets, and composers, and it is evident in our cultural landscape.

This document examines an area of pirate literature that has been neglected, if ever discussed: the published pirate song for solo voice and piano accompaniment. Over the past two centuries many such pirate-themed compositions have been composed, published, sold, and circulated. Yet today, much like the elusive pirates themselves, most of this musical repertoire has become obscure. It, too, has nearly vanished, remaining seldom performed, mostly forgotten, and now buried at the bottom of the proverbial musical sea.

My breadth of study is that of existing “classical” scores: published sheet music for voice and piano, either currently in print or long out-of-print, still under copyright, or now in the public domain. Based on the actual source material—the scores I have found and obtained—I have created a reference piece. Through the unearthing and reexamination of these long forgotten and seldom-heard songs, I will illustrate how this repertoire can serve as a viable performing resource for the practicing and performing

singer as well as a teaching asset for the vocal educator. It is my goal to illuminate for the reader the most salient features of each piece, be they musical, pedagogical, textual, historical, or any combination thereof. The result of this examination, therefore, is a comprehensive catalogue or literature guide providing valuable detailed information about the songs found within this overlooked repertoire.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Pirates have always been mysterious figures. They came out of nowhere, attacked their victims, plundered their goods, and vanished. Reason tells us that pirates were no more than common criminals, but over the centuries, history has come to portray them as romantic and even heroic figures. This stereotype of piracy has long been a fascination of authors, poets, and composers, and it is evident in our cultural landscape. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these marauders of the sea have swaggered through the scores and stages of operas and musicals, sauntered through the pages of novels and plays, and swashbuckled their way across the silver screen.

This document examines an area of pirate literature that has been neglected, if ever discussed: the published pirate song for solo voice and piano accompaniment. Over the past two centuries many such pirate-themed compositions have been composed, published, sold, and circulated. Yet today, much like the elusive pirates themselves, most of this musical repertoire has become obscure. It, too, has nearly vanished, remaining seldom performed, mostly forgotten, and now buried at the bottom of the proverbial musical sea.

Yes, pirates are looked at with a wink and a smile in today's popular culture, but what I am suggesting is that we have a truly legitimate research topic that has not been explored before. Over the past seven years, I have been researching, gathering, and collecting scores of any song for solo voice and piano dealing with the subject of pirates, buccaneers, corsairs, rovers, raiders, freebooters, sea robbers and other bandits of the seas. To focus the scope of this topic, I have purposely excluded songs found within

larger works such as operas, operettas, and musicals, and have limited the collection to original English language songs only. Each of my collected pirate songs can be thought of as “stand alone” pieces meant to be sung in the “creek” of the piano: art songs, recital pieces, and concert repertoire. These songs are not sea chanteys (that is, songs passed on from sailor to sailor by word of mouth), songs written down in word form only, or those melody-only examples transcribed by ethnomusicologists. Nor have I included any pirate songs found in what is considered to be the folk, pop, or rock realms of music. My breadth of study is that of existing “classical” scores: sheet music for voice and piano, published at one time or another, either currently in print or long out-of-print, still under copyright, or now in the public domain. At this point in my studies, I possess a large majority of such available pieces. From this collection I have developed the following reference guide.

Through the unearthing and reexamination of these long forgotten and seldom heard songs, I will illustrate how this repertoire can serve as a viable performing resource for the practicing and performing singer as well as a teaching asset for the vocal educator. It is my goal to present some of the most salient features of each piece, be they musical, pedagogical, textual, historical, or any combination thereof. I choose not to address every issue, but only to give a flavor of what one can expect—and illuminate the reader to those characteristics/traits about each of the songs I find most interesting. The crux of this document, therefore, is a comprehensive catalogue or literature guide providing valuable detailed information about the songs found within this overlooked repertoire. Now totaling 81 pirate songs, this guide is arranged in chronological order according to composition, from earliest (1824) to the most recent (2010). A by-product of this

document is that it represents the only existing compiled documentary source of English language pirate poetry set to music.

The idea of outlining song construction is not new, and is based on a well-known resource in the Art Song world: the broad-scoped book on song repertoire entitled *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, by author, singer, and voice pedagogue Carol Kimball. Many such literature and style guides exist in the area of song repertoire, but it is Kimball's description of *style* that is the model for this document. Kimball states:

“Style is easier to describe than define. It is a combination of the song's parts – its melodies, harmonies, rhythms, texts.”<sup>1</sup> She continues:

Since every song has the same kinds of components (melody, harmony, rhythm, accompaniment, text), when we study a song's style, we need to examine the distinctive way the composer handles these elements. We can describe the song's components in finer and finer detail and categorize them in a list – a *style sheet*. As we read through our style sheet, we can begin to get an idea of not only the overall design of a song, but also the composer's particular method of working with the song's various parts. We will begin to understand, how, cumulatively, all facets of the song create the imagery of the song, which ultimately inspires the performer and stimulates the listener.<sup>2</sup>

By outlining the song structure, the singer can then interpret the list for performance.

They can decide which traits to articulate, which images to emphasize, which aspects of the song to give special treatment or added focus.

The layout of each pirate song entry in this document is as follows: First, the song title along and date of composition is given. If composition date is unknown, the first known published date is given. Next, the vocal range is specified and the song's composer and poet are identified along with their birth and death dates. The text or poetry of the song is then printed. Finally, the song's compositional traits and performance

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Style and Literature* (Redmond, WA: Pst...Inc., 1996), 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

characteristics are clearly identified and explained. Elements such as melody, harmony, form, texture, rhythm, timbre, range, accompaniment, and poetry are addressed throughout to illustrate the song's musical aptitude and application in performance. Recommendations as to what voice type or vocal skill level for which the song is best suited are included as necessary. This format and layout will help provide essential information to the singer and teacher wishing to gain an overview of the song's qualities and relevance when choosing and/or assigning vocal literature for the studio and stage alike.

A set of indices is included after the final song entry, allowing for quick access to songs in the guide. There are separate indices to composers, poets, and song titles, and there is also a "Special Characteristics" index. This section categorizes the selections into thematic groupings (e.g. drinking songs, female pirate songs, love songs and serenades, pirate "recruitment" songs, children's songs, songs extolling the virtues of piracy, songs decrying piracy, and songs sung by former, but now "reformed" pirates). It is possible for a particular song to be cross-listed as needed. A final "Vocabulary Appendix" is included to further define unfamiliar or archaic terms used in the poetry of the pirate songs.

Finally, the bibliography section of the document is separated into two categories. The first, labeled "Primary Source Materials," contains the 81 pirate songs considered in this study. Arranged alphabetically by composer, these collated pirate song sources serve as a valuable resource for the singer or vocal pedagogue wishing to obtain, study, learn, or perform the songs. The second bibliographic category, titled "Secondary Source Materials," enumerates all other sources researched, studied, and consulted in the preparation and writing of this document.

In 2006, when I first thought about the idea of examining solo pirate song literature, my fear was that I would log into WorldCat, the worldwide library content search tool, find ten songs in C minor set to “Yo-ho!, Yo-ho!” and then have nothing to more to say. I’m happy to report that even after amassing 81 songs of varying styles and structures, I know that there are still others out there waiting to be salvaged. Through the internet, we now have access to sheet music consortium projects in which libraries can scan scores of rare or long out-of-print music, much of which until now, has been housed in special collections, out of the reach of many electronic catalogues and searches. An increasing number of libraries are adding titles through these means and I look forward to discovering even more pirate pieces as new search tools and investigative resources become available.

“The thrill is in the hunt,” and it is my intention that this research remain an ongoing scholarly project. Authentic pirate literature for solo voice and piano has been previously unexplored, and is a specialty for which I have a genuine passion. One of my professional goals is to establish a significant place for these songs within the vocal music canon. I am confident this document will serve as a model and launching point for future scholarly presentations as well as a planned sheet music anthology, containing the complete piano/vocal scores of this rare material.

CHAPTER 2

## PIRATE SONG ANALYSES

The Pirate Lover (1824)Range: E4 – G5

Music by James P. Aykroyd (1810 – 1835)

Text by James Gates Percival (1795 – 1856)

Thou art gone from thy lover, thou lord of the sea!  
 The illusion is over, that bound me to thee;  
 I cannot regret thee, though dearest thou wert,  
 Nor can I forget thee, thou Lord of my Heart!

I lov'd thee too deeply, to hate thee and live;  
 I am blind to the brightest, my country can give;  
 But I cannot behold thee in plunder and gore,  
 And thy Minna can fold thee in fondness no more.

Far over the billow thy black vessel rides;  
 The wave is thy pillow, they pathway the tides;  
 Thy cannons are pointed, thy red flag on high,  
 The crew are undaunted, but yet thou must die.

I thought thou wert brave as the sea kings of old;  
 But thy heart is a slave and a victim to gold:  
 My faith can be plighted to none but the free;  
 Thy low heart has blighted my fond hopes in thee.

I will not upbraid thee; I leave thee to hear  
 The shame, thou hast made thee its danger and care:  
 As thy banner is streaming far over the sea,  
 Oh, my fond heart is dreaming and breaking for thee.

My heart thou hast broken, thou Lord of the wave!  
 Thou hast left me a token to rest in my grave:  
 Though false, mean, and cruel, thou still must be dear,  
 And they name, like a jewel, be treasured up here.

James P. Aykroyd was an early American composer, arranger, and music educator of piano, organ, and voice, and lived his life in North Carolina and Tennessee. Set to lyrics penned by Yale graduate-turned-dictionary editor, James Percival, “Pirate Lover”

is written for the female voice. The woman here laments her situation as she bids farewell to her mate who has gone off to sea to fight and most likely die. The simple piano accompaniment supports the vocal melody, often doubling it, and its characteristic feature is the frequent appearance of turns found in the right hand, both in the introduction and the interludes between strophes, suggesting an air of elegance and grace.

Dynamic markings are clearly indicated throughout the song, which is strophic in form with repeating A and B sections. As there are a total of six verses, it is important for the singer to approach each one with a varying sense of delivery and emotion in the voice. The mostly conjunct melodic line offers the vocalist opportunities for fine legato singing, which reinforces proper breath support and sense of forward motion in the voice.

## The Pirate's Deserted Bride (1830)

Range: Eb4 – Eb5

Music by Willhelm Christian Sellé (1813 – 1898)

Text by Harry Stoe Van Dyk (1798 – 1828)

Far o'er the sea the bark is gone,  
 With her blood red flag above;  
 I am left to weep alone,  
 My sorrows and my love:  
 My fears rise with the rising gale,  
 For my heart is on the main;  
 Oh! I ne'er shall see that spreading sail,  
 And blood red flag again.

Far o'er the sea whilst waves roll high,  
 The bark out strips the wind  
 And Conrade gives perchance no sigh,  
 For her he leaves behind:  
 Yet oh! For him my sighs shall burst,  
 And for him my warm tears flow  
 That love is faithful which is nurs'd  
 Midst bitterness and woe.

Soon the fair rose which pleasure wears,  
 In the height of transport now....  
 Shall lose the flatt'ring bloom it bears,  
 And wither her brow:  
 But sorrow's mournful cypress wreath,  
 Is more constant tho' less fair....  
 It courts the brow in the life, and death  
 Still finds it clinging there.

Set to the words of Dutch poet, Harry Stoe Van Dyk, "The Pirate's Deserted Bride" by Willhelm Christian Sellé is a fine example of songs found in this era, spoken from the point of view of the female pirate lover. The woman here, because of her man's seafaring exploits, has found herself alone, abandoned by her pirate companion, left to wait for a return that may or may not happen. In days of piracy it was considered

dangerous and bad luck for sailors to carry women on board, for fear they would be wounded or, as was more often the case, be stolen by foes from other ships<sup>3</sup>.

This charming piece with straightforward strophic verses possesses an air of simple, yet refined elegance. The melodic range spans only an octave, and the lyrics, set to a smooth legato vocal line, are very sentimental and melodramatic. There are a few downward leaps at ends of phrases, but otherwise the voice sings in mostly stepwise motion. The singer states “My fears rise with the rising gale” and the vocal line too rises stepwise. The piano part plays along, gradually climbing by step in the left hand. An awkward characteristic exists in the melody in two particular areas of the song: where the words “blood red flag” appear, “blood” is sung as a dotted quarter note and then “red” and “flag” are sung quickly as eighth notes. This gives the phrase a strange and uneven emphasis when sung and should be approached with care. A refreshing feature of this song is the fact that the accompaniment does not simply double the voice, but instead supports it harmonically through the use of Alberti bass figures, arpeggios, and block chords. “The Pirate’s Deserted Bride” is well-suited for the beginning singer and seasoned performer alike and offers a fitting glimpse into the world of the female pirate lover.

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<sup>3</sup> Kris E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 186.

## The Pirate's Farewell (1830)

Range: B $\flat$ 3 – E $\flat$ 4

Music by Mrs. Robert Arkwright (Frances Crauford) (d.1849)

Text by Sir Walter Scott (1771 – 1832)

Farewell! Farewell! The voice you hear,  
Has left its last soft tone with you,  
Its next must join the seaward cheer,  
And shout among the shouting crew.

The accents which I scarce could form  
Beneath your frown's controlling check,  
Must give the word, above the storm,  
To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.

The timid eye I dared not raise,  
The hand, that shook when press'd to thine,  
Must point the guns upon the chase  
Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.

To all I love, or hope, or fear,  
Honor, or own, a long adieu!  
To all that life has soft and dear,  
Farewell! save memory of you!

Scottish writer and poet Sir Walter Scott first wrote these lyrics as a serenade sung by the pirate character, Captain Cleveland, in his 1821 novel, *The Pirate*. Nine years later in 1830, female composer Frances Crauford Arkwright set them to music. The song is composed as two strophic verses, each containing an A and B melodic statement. Both statements are characterized by long, legato vocal phrases. The pirate sings a farewell serenade to his lover stating that he must go out to sea and fight as the ship's captain, uncertain of his return.

The text of the piece is very interesting in that the pirate is serenading his love in one moment, and then describing his piratical, seafaring actions the next. An elegant arpeggiated accompaniment underpinning the narrative throughout is appropriate for a serenade, but fails to match the rough action aboard the ship whatsoever.

At first glance this song seems relatively simple, yet the suggested tempo of *moderato* can easily leave the singer gasping for air if he tends toward its slower side. Moreover, the vocal line contains frequent leaps of fourths, fifths, and sixths which can present a challenge should the singer be trying to maintain a homogenized sound. “The Pirate’s Farewell” is appropriate for the young vocalist looking to focus on good solid, melodic singing, showcasing a fine legato line and an intuitive sense of musicality.

## The Night: A Pirate's Song (1832)

Range: C#3 – E4

Music by Benjamin Hime (1796 – 1871)

Text by Charles Swain (1801 – 1874)

I Love the Night, when the gale sweeps high,  
 And the summer-calms are o'er;  
 When the ship, like an Ocean-steed, leaps by  
 Where the midland breakers roar!  
 I love the Night, and the startling light  
 Of the Spirit of the Storm;  
 And better the blast, and the rocking mast,  
 Than the sun-set mild and warm!

No love have I for the starry eve—  
 No joy on the breezeless main—  
 But I long to hear the tempest grieve,  
 And list the thunder-strain!  
 Let the gondola glide o'er the moonlight tide,  
 And the mandolin wake its song;  
 I love the bark, when the seas are dark,  
 And the midnight wild and long!

I turn away from the lover's lay—  
 'Tis weariness to hear  
 The lisping note, and the warbling throat,  
 Of the sighing Cavalier!  
 Oh! the Ocean-shout, when the Storm is out,  
 Is a nobler strain to me;  
 Here would I sleep, where the billows leap,  
 On the bold, unconquer'd Sea!

This rousing and energetic piece in 6/8 time contains an extensive bravura piano introduction, appropriately setting up the feeling of intensity and adventure to come with its opening melodic statement set atop a mixture of rapidly repeating chordal eighth note figures and rushing arpeggios in the bass. The extended eleven-measure piano interludes between each verse are interesting as well, as they extend the drama even after the singer has finished his phrase, “And the ship like an Ocean steed leaps by!” A notable trait of this song is the phrase, “I Love the Night when the gale sweeps high...” which returns as

a refrain at the end of each verse and serves as a recurring motive. The hurried, rhapsodic arpeggiated figures in the accompaniment wonderfully portray the ebb and flow of roaring ocean waves.

Regarding the song's vocal range, the frequent leaps of sixths and octaves are challenging and would be best suited for the advanced student. There are the wonderful examples of text painting found in this song. Arpeggios built on C# sharp major, B minor, and F# minor beneath the text: "let the gondola glide, o'er the moonlight tide, and the mandolin wake its song" clearly suggest the plucking of the mandolin strings as the gondola glides over the sea. A falling melodic figure suggests the sigh of "the sighing Cavalier." "The Night" requires both a skilled accompanist and an experienced singer as the aforementioned qualities might suggest. It is a lively piece that would serve as an excellent set opener or concert finale.

## The Rover's Bride (1832)

Range: C3 – G4

Music by George Alexander Lee (1802 – 1851)

Text by Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797 – 1839)

“Oh if you love me, furl your sails,  
 Draw up your boat on shore,  
 Come tell me tales of midnight gales  
 But tempt their might no more.”  
 “Come stay,” Kate whisper'd, “Stay with me!”  
 “Fear not!” the rover cried.  
 “Yon bark shall be a prize for thee,  
 I'll seize it for my bride.”

The boat was in pursuit, it flew;  
 The full sails bent the mast!  
 Poor Kate well knew the Rover's crew  
 Would struggle to the last.  
 And ceaselessly for morning's light  
 She pray'd upon her knees,  
 For all the night, the sounds of fight  
 Were borne upon the breeze!

And morning came it brought despair!  
 The rover's boat was gone!  
 Kate rent her hair, one bark was there  
 Triumphant but alone!  
 She sought the shore she brav'd the storm  
 A corpse lay by her side!  
 She strove to warm the Rover's form,  
 Then kissed his lips, and died.

From the onset of this piece, Thomas Haynes Bayley's poetry is set in rather dramatic fashion. First, there is a brilliant opening rhythmic octave statement in the piano, which sounds like a horn call. Having drawn the listener's attention, the piano suddenly changes from 4/4 to 6/8 meter and, playing galloping major block chords, sets the stage for the action to come. The text begins as a dialogue between the pirate bride and her lover who is going off to battle. The pirate speaks in a declamatory manner, while the voice of the bride is set more softly and subtly. While these opening lines give the

singer an opportunity to display an array of vocal timbres, the remaining story is told solely in the third person voice of the narrator.

There are many contrasts in tempo as the singer is called to unfold the dramatic story of the lovers' fate. The pirate rover vows to capture and acquire for his bride another boat sailing just offshore. She begs him to stay but is left on land only to hear the ensuing battle ringing on through the dark night. Markings such as *andante quasi allegretto*, *adagio*, *lentando*, *agitato*, and *ad libitum* guide the singer's pacing. The anticipation builds toward the end of the story as the final verse contains a series of dramatic pauses in the form of fermatas in the voice and accompaniment, creating suspense for the listener as the fate of the pirate is revealed: "She sought the shore" (pause), "She braved the storm," (pause), "A corpse lay by her side. She strove to warm" (pause), "The rover's form" (pause) "Then kissed his lips" (pause), "and died."

Interestingly the harmonic structure of this song stays in C major throughout, never changing to a minor tonality when expressing the despair and bitterness of the bride or the realization of her lover's death. Vocally, the song is not challenging and is very tuneful in nature as it rolls along in its 6/8 meter. The singer should pay special attention however to the optional grace notes, turns, and glissandos, which offer various opportunities for vocal display; showcasing the flexibility, elegance, and beauty of the voice.

## The Rover's Home (1832)

Range: D3 – G4

Music by John Feltham Danneley (1786 – 1834)

Text by Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797 – 1839)

Oh talk no more of the tranquil shore,  
Of charms of hill and dale,  
We love to float in the rover's boat,  
Borne on the northern gale,  
We look below where the waters flow,  
And we look to skies above,  
Then tell me not of the landsman's lot,  
For this is the life we love.

Fearless we view the enemies crew,  
When their proud flag waves before us,  
We dread not wreck on the Rover's deck,  
Though storms are howling o'er us,  
You tremble to hear of the Rover's career,  
Track'd by the white sea foam,  
Tempests and strife are the charms of life,  
And the deep is the Rover's home.

Set in a somewhat high tessitura (B4 – G4), “The Rover's Home” is best suited for the intermediate tenor voice with a solid G. The vocal line in this song, encompassing an octave and a fourth, is most always doubled and sometimes even tripled in octaves in the accompaniment. Perhaps J.F. Danneley did this to create a bold and broad texture, but the result sounds a bit tedious at times. Many of the melodic vocal phrases merely outline arpeggiations of the chord structures of the song.

Refreshing text painting appears as the melody rises and falls in upward and downward leaps as the verse states, “We look below where the waters flow and we look to skies above.” Again, the speaker exclaims, “We love to float in the Rover's boat, borne on by the northern gale.” Here there are dotted rhythmic figures built on rising and falling neighbor tones in the piano and voice evoking the ebb and flow of the boat on the waves. A rapidly rising sixteenth note scalar passage in the right hand, representing the strong

winds of the North, follows. The song ends in a flourish by way of a vocal cadenza on the word “love.” Though the run is not overly difficult, the singer must be precise in pitch since the piano doubles the notes in the right hand, while harmonizing in 3rds on the same rhythm in the left.

From its opening measures to its final cadence, this song’s text of pirate exhortations may tempt the singer to vocalize with big and boisterous sounds throughout as the daring life of piracy is described. But the singer should pay close to the various directions, which indicate otherwise. *Subito piano*, *cres. poco a poco*, and *dolce* markings suggest a wider palette of colors for the vocal approach.

## La Belle Julie (1833)

Range: C3 – F4

Music by Robert Gylott (1794 – 1876)

Text by William Clarke (dates unknown)

Her name was 'broider'd on his flag,  
*La Belle Julie* the pirate's bride,  
 It trembled o'er him in the fight,  
 It proved his shroud when Gaspar died.

For him she left her native land,  
 And while he bravely swept the sea,  
 Gazed oft afar from the lonely isle  
 For Gaspar's flag, *La Belle Julie*

One venture more and then I've done,  
 Ma Belle Julie the pirate cried,  
 It proved his last, his crew were slain,  
 He fired his bark and proudly died,

The wind blew loud, she left her couch,  
 A corpse was floating on the Sea  
 It came to land, 'twas the pirate's face  
 His banner shroud *La Belle Julie*.

This romantic setting of “*La Belle Julie*” is appropriate for the young to intermediate singer. With its simple and somewhat predictable melodies, conjunct melismatic vocal passages, and dotted dance-like rhythms, this modified strophic setting of William Clarke's poem is both an easy read and a quick learn. The first and second stanzas of the song contain the same melodic material in the voice, yet the piano part differs the second time through, containing a varied texture of staccato broken chords and marcato block chords. A notable harsh critique of Gylott's pirate song was published in *The Spectator*, a weekly journal of news, literature, politics and science the week of March 23, 1833:

There are persons passing, among the ignorant, for singers, who have a sort of nervous horror of flats and sharps: to such we can safely recommend this song. It

is almost guiltless of any such abominations. They may safely venture through two pages (having started in C) without encountering more than a solitary *F sharp*. We presume that Mr. Guylott had an eye to their capabilities and powers when he wrote “La belle Julie”; and to them we commend it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *The Spectator* 6, no. 247, (The week of March 23, 1833) : 264.

## The Red Rover's Song (1833)

Range: D3 – F#4

Music by Chevalier Sigismund Ritter von Neukomm (1778 – 1858)

Text by Edmund Smith (dates unknown)

A Merry life is ours, I trow,  
 While o'er the billows surge we go  
 Our birthright joy! to care unknown,  
 For time and pleasure are our own.  
 O'er bounding main we boldly dash,  
 'Mid thunder's peal, and lightning's flash.

The skies may frown, or be they fair,  
 We little look, and less we care.  
 And gaily sail, our track to keep,  
 Upon the proud and peerless deep.  
 The land we loathe, the Sea we love,  
 For joys it hath all joys above.

We joy to see the Dolphins play,  
 Beneath the sun-lit sparkling ray.  
 To mark while on our course we run,  
 The splendor of the setting sun.  
 But oh! our greatest joy will be;  
 To feel, to know we're brave and free.

“The Red Rover's Song” by Chevalier Neukomm contains a dramatic piano accompaniment complete with a variety of figures, which support a broadly phrased and rather virile vocal part. The song is composed in simple strophic form and, interestingly, the singer's portion is quite brief. The accompaniment plays the prominent role by bookending the piece with a 13-measure introduction and an 8-measure concluding statement with a mere 14 measures of actual singing in each stanza.

The cover art of the published sheet music depicts a pirate captain standing on the deck of his vessel, cutlass raised in one arm while holding tight to the rigging with the other. The skull and crossbones fly overhead affixed to the ship's mainsail and cannon balls lay strewn about his feet. It is not hard to imagine then the sounds found within the

song's pages; "O'er bounding main we boldly dash, 'Mid thunder's peal, and lightning's flash," cries the captain, as wavering sixteenth notes in the right hand strike thunderously, with lightning-fast ferocity. Though brief, the weight of the song's 6/8 galloping block chord accompaniment, together with the brawny, swinging vocal line and subject matter, suggests a full and strong singer with advanced ability.

## The Buccaneers' Song (Song the Buccaniers) (1834)

Music by John Barnett (1802 – 1890)

Range: E3 – E4

Text by Edmund Smith (dates unknown)

Our home been, for fifty years,  
 The bosom of the sea;  
 To share the joys that wait, my boys,  
 The bold, the brave, the free.  
 We love the waves our vessel braves;  
 By freedom's chart we steer;  
 Care know never, joy forever,  
 Throughout each happy year.

In summer's heat and winter's chill,  
 Our wine-cups' juice we drain;  
 Each man a king, we gaily sing  
 The pleasures of the main:  
 The sea, it was our cradle, boys;  
 Our grave then let it be;  
 While on we sail, thro' storm and gale,  
 Brave Buccaneers at Sea.

Marked *allegretto giocoso*, this gallant song, complete with its simple harmonies and clear, even phrasing, comes across quite genteel in its approach. There are no sudden dynamic changes and the strophic structure of the piece lends itself well to the even 8 line stanzas. The light, mostly homophonic accompaniment, with its frequent cadences, is also well matched to the plethora of four-measure vocal phrases found within. Even amidst a restricted vocal range and lack of chromatic variety, the singer still has an opportunity to display lyricism and vocal beauty as the simple melodies are unveiled.

With regard to the poetry, it could be imagined that the speaker here is not the captain of the ship like in many of the pirate songs found in this collection, but instead a deck hand or member of the crew. He toasts his fellow men, “Our wine cups' juice we drain; each man a king, we gaily sing.” He continues speaking fondly of the open water (“The sea, it was our cradle, boys; our grave then let it be”) with the melody gradually

descending like a musical analogue, while the piano doubles the voice in simple diatonic harmonies. As the last line is stated, the captain repeats the tuneful melody and buoyant rhythm as if rousing the mates to join in the *fortissimo* egalitarian chorus; “Brave buccaneers at sea, at sea, Brave buccaneers, at sea, at sea.”

## The Corsair's Bride (1835)

Range: D4 – E5

Music by L. Zerbini (dates unknown)

Text by “The Lady of a Noble Duke”

For thee I left a Father's arms,  
 And many a kindred Smile;  
 Gay scenes that had a thousand charms,  
 For this lone sea girt Isle,  
 Now seated in a moss grown cave,  
 I watch the foaming tide,  
 And mourn the hour that I became  
 A ruthless Corsair's bride.

In spacious guise a Warrior brave,  
 His armor glittering bright;  
 He wooed and wooed me by his smiles,  
 My artless faith to plight;  
 With well stor'd caskets for my dow'r<sup>5</sup>,  
 The stormy waves defied,  
 But little dream'd that fatal hour,  
 Made me a Corsair's bride.

Betrayed by his seeming love,  
 Thro' mournful scenes to roam;  
 While memory so keen points out,  
 My much regretted Home.  
 Lay still my harp, with chords unstrung  
 Tho once you were my pride;  
 The willow does best become  
 The Corsair's weeping bride.

This descriptive ballad for female voice is written as a strophic lament in which a corsair's bride describes her hopeless situation. She waits in a moss-grown cave for the return of her pirate husband who has dropped her off and gone to fight aboard his ship. Interestingly, the text here is attributed not to a specific person, but simply to “The Lady of a Noble Duke.” This way of crediting female authorship was a regular occurrence at the time. Other examples found in these pirate songs that reinforce the idea that Victorian

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<sup>5</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

women did not have their own identities outside of their relationships with their male counterparts include using only the female author's initials, referring to the woman by her husband's name (Mrs. George Smith), or even using a male pseudonym for the female author<sup>6</sup>.

The singer cannot rely on the nature of the accompaniment to convey the song's true emotion. Though textually this song is drenched in regret and despair, it stays in a major key throughout. The light nature of the accompaniment, with its dancing arpeggiations and repetitive, light-hearted broken chord patterns, betrays the sadness of the story, much like the pirate betrayed his bride. Some interesting chromaticism appears at the end of each stanza, especially on the final verse where, on the last word "weeping," there is a poignant *ad libitum* phrase comprised of an E $\flat$  to E $\natural$  figure which depicts the woman's sentiments nicely.

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<sup>6</sup> Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 96-99.

## The Pirate Crew (1835)

Range: D3 – F4

Music by Joseph Philip Knight (1812 – 1887)

Text by W. Edwards (dates unknown)

O'er the wide world of waters we roam ever free,  
 Sea-kings and rovers bold Pirates are we.  
 We own no dominion what matter we sail,  
 Lighted and true in the loud roaring gale  
 We love the black storm as we ride o'er the billows,  
 The strong timbers creak, the mast shakes like billows.  
 But fearless in danger we brave the mad foam,  
 Ever free on the deep wide ocean our home.  
 Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Merry the life of the bold Pirate crew  
 Dauntless and daring the deeds that they do,  
 Hurrah! The black banner is nail'd to the mast,  
 Death to the foe as it waves in the blast!

“Crowd sail! A strange vessel is heaving in sight,”  
 Shouts the pirate aloft, “She is ours tonight”  
 How we dash thro' the foam bearing down on the prize,  
 No quarter we'll give to the stranger that flies,  
 “Clear the decks,” ever brave are pirates in battle,  
 Our sabres flash brightly the loud cannon rattle!  
 Now we board her in triumph, and bear her away,  
 Three cheers for the prize as we bound o'er the spray!  
 Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Merry the life of the bold Pirate crew  
 Dauntless and daring the deeds that they do,  
 Hurrah! The black banner is nail'd to the mast,  
 Death to the foe as it waves in the blast!

The accompaniment to this pirate victory song contains a galloping rhythm of repetitious triadic eighth and sixteenth note chords, which provides a buoyant and flashy underpinning for the singer to glide over as he proclaims the ideals of his merciless lifestyle. The glamorization of the pirate ways is repeated throughout as a triumphant refrain of three cheers via a “Hurrah.” Here, the soloist sings first on the tonic G3. The piano answers with an open G chord. The singer strikes again, this time on a B4. The

piano echoes, this time with a G dominant seventh chord. The singer then completes the dominant seventh himself singing his last “Hurrah” from a D4 to an F4. This call and response action represents the crew affirming the shouts of their bold leader.

Other endearing qualities of this song can be found in the strophic verses 1 and 2, where the singer is heard describing the ship as it takes on the billowing waves: “The strong timbers creak, the masts shake like willows.” These sounds are represented by the low wavering 32<sup>nd</sup> note trills on F#2 and G2 in the piano’s left hand and the minor and fully diminished seventh chords in the right. The same thing happens in verse 2 on the descriptive words, “Our sabres flash brightly and loud cannon rattle!” Finally, the song’s ending refrain proclaims, “Hurrah! the black banner is nail’d to the mast, death to the foe! as it waves in the blast.” “As it waves” is repeated twice by the singer with “waving” eighth-note neighbor tones doubled and tripled in the piano. This flashy ending is sure to captivate a willing audience and would serve well as a final piece to a recital set or as a show closer.

## The Pirate's Serenade (1838)

Range: B $\flat$ 3 – F4

Music by John Thomson (1805 – 1841)

Text source unknown

My boat's by the tow'r, my barque's in the bay,  
 And both must be gone ere the dawning of day.  
 The moon's in her shroud, but to guide thee afar,  
 On the deck of the daring's a love lighted star.  
 Then wake lady wake. I am waiting for thee.  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.  
 Then wake, lady wake, I am waiting for thee,  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.

Forgive my rough mood, unaccustom'd to sue<sup>7</sup>,  
 I woo not perhaps as your land lovers woo,  
 My voice has been tuned to the notes of the gun,  
 That startle the deep when the combat's begun.  
 And heavy and hard is the grasp of the hand,  
 Whose glove has been ever the guard of our band.  
 Then wake, lady wake, I am waiting for thee,  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.

Oh! Islands there are on the face of the deep,  
 Where the leaves never change, and the skies never weep,  
 And there if thou wilt, our love bower shall be,  
 When we leave for the greenwood our home on the sea.  
 And there thou shalt sing of the deeds that were done,  
 When we loos'd the last blast and the last battle won.  
 Then wake, lady wake, I am waiting for thee.  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.

Oh! haste, lady haste, for the fair breezes blow,  
 And my ocean bird poises her pinions of snow;  
 Now fast to the lattice these silken cords twine.  
 They are meet for such feet and such fingers as thine!  
 The signal my mates— ho! hurrah! for the sea.  
 This night and forever my bride thou shalt be.  
 The signal my mates— ho! hurrah! for the sea.  
 This night and forever my bride thou shalt be.

This spirited serenade sung by a pirate to his lover is written with an energetic, thick-textured accompaniment built on alternating eighth and sixteenth note patterns in

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<sup>7</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

the left and right hands respectively, depicting the plucking of strings on the guitar or mandolin. The vocal melody begins many of its initial phrases by outlining the supporting chords via rising arpeggios. What follows then on the consequent phrases is a lilting step-wise figure. The serenade melody is designed this way throughout the song.

The singer must be secure in his pitches and melodic delivery, as the piano does not double the voice. Moreover, “The Pirate’s Serenade” is a song with a large range of an octave and fifth whose ground is covered rather quickly at times. Keeping this in mind, the singer should be keen to maintain a balanced, homogenized timbre throughout.

## The Rover's Flag (1838)

Music by Montague Corri (1784 – 1849)

Text source unknown

Range: B $\flat$ 3 – E $\flat$ 4

O ever a Rover's life for me  
 With a heart as wild, as wild can be,  
 On my own bright gallant bark to stand  
 What then to me are the joys of land?  
 With canvas spread where'er I roam  
 The deep, deep sea to me's a home,  
 And my heart on that would ever be  
 With the black flag roving gallantly.

Whatever of good or ill betide,  
 Ever would I on the billows ride  
 Swift as the flight of the Hawk to sail  
 In search of spoil before the gale.  
 With all my heart would ever love  
 My dark ey'd girl, my flag above  
 And my heart on that would ever be  
 With the Black Flag roving gallantly.

Published in 1838, “The Rover’s Flag” by Montague Corri delights us with an elegant piano introduction and postlude, which sounds much like the second theme of Bellini’s *Norma* overture, premiered seven years earlier. It is not surprising, then, to learn that Corri also wrote a Burlesque on *Norma* using music directly from Bellini’s opera.

“The Rover’s Flag” sounds like a proud pirate anthem of sorts, as the pirate freely proclaims his devotion and loyalty to the black flag he flies. The arietta-like song is brief, lyrical, and allows the soloist to shine brilliantly. Two different moments in the song call for cadenzas. The first is written out note for note where the singer talks about the deep sea being his home. The initial statement of “home” is placed under a fermata on B $\flat$ 4. What follows is a brief ascending three-note pattern followed by a descending scalar cadenza that finally lands on the B $\flat$ 3 an octave below. The singer may be encouraged the

second time around to vary this statement and compose his own cadenza in order to provide contrast within the strophic form.

On the song's final word, "gallantly," the B $\flat$ 4 pitch is also placed under a fermata. Though no cadenza is written here, common practice could allow the soloist to insert one, possibly creating a pattern to end on a high E $\flat$ 4 rather than the printed E $\flat$ 3. Such a vocal flourish would match the exuberance of the poet's message and bring some variation to the piece as well.

## The Corsair's Farewell (1840)

Range: E3 – F#4

Music and Text by George Linley (1798 – 1865)

Goodbye! my love, goodbye!  
 Our bark is to the bay,  
 And we gain Isle Idra,  
 Before the blush of day.  
 Nay! Weep not tho' I go  
 To peril o'er the main,  
 My blood red flag ere long  
 Shall meet they gaze again.

List! Tis the well known signal gun  
 Days bright orb his course hath run;  
 One kiss, goodbye!

The breeze is flowing freshly,  
 My crew but wait for me,  
 And yonder, like some wild bird,  
 My bark's white wings I see;  
 Ne'er whisper, love, of danger,  
 Dry up that timid tear,  
 Thou art a Corsair's Bride,  
 And shouldst not harbor fear.

Hark, again, the signal gun!  
 Fare thee well, my lovely one!  
 One kiss goodbye!

Goodbye! my love, goodbye!  
 Our bark is to the bay,  
 And we gain Isle Idra,  
 Before the blush of day.  
 Nay! Weep not tho' I go  
 To peril o'er the main,  
 My blood red flag ere long  
 Shall meet they gaze again.

British composer George Linley made his living as an opera librettist and a writer and composer of songs and ballads. Linley wrote and composed several hundred songs between 1830 and 1865 and among those most fashionable and popular ballads is “The

Corsair's Farewell" published 1840<sup>8</sup>. Like many other pirate-themed love songs of the day, the pirate protagonist here is bidding adieu to his love as he readies to go afloat on the perilous ocean, tempting his fate as plunderer and sailor.

The song is set in a major key and focuses on the corsair reassuring his bride that though rough seas lie ahead, he will return. Upon inspection of the text setting, it seems the rhythm of the poetry at times does not fit very naturally on the vocal line. For example, when the corsair says, "Nay! weep not though I go to peril on the Main," both "weep" and "peril" is set in a peculiar way with odd emphasis on the syllables. "Weep" is sung on the strong down beat of the 6/8 measure, while "not" is sung flippantly on beat 3. It almost seems as if the singer is making light of his impending doom. It could be construed that the corsair is attempting to calm the bride's fears, lightening the mood as such. In either case, the soloist here must proceed with caution.

As the first stanza nears its end, there are two measures of accompaniment where an E3 and E4 are played in octaves. The notes sound twice, with each statement lasting one full measure, and are representative of a signal gun heard off in the distance as if to warn of some upcoming action. What follows is a complete change of character in the singer. He exclaims, "List! 'tis the well known signal gun." Here for the first time, we see the lighthearted pirate's more serious side: that of the loyal crewman. He now sounds militaristic in his singing as the piano plays along, in march-like fashion. The corsair continues to sing sturdily as if to convey his sense of duty and loyalty to his men. Well-suited for an intermediate to advanced singer with a solid F#4, the soloist has an

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<sup>8</sup> L.M. Middleton, "Linley, George" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sidney Lee, volume 33. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1893).

opportunity here to act out these character differences both in vocal delivery and stage presence.

## I'm Afloat (1841)

Range: D#3 – E4

Music by John M. White (dates unknown)

Text by Eliza Cook (1818 – 1889)

I'm afloat! I'm afloat! On the fierce rolling tide.  
The ocean's my home, and my bark is my bride!  
Up! Up! With the flag! Let it wave o'er the sea,  
I'm afloat! I'm afloat! And the rover is free!

I fear not the monarch, I heed not the law;  
I've a compass to steer by, a dagger to draw;  
And ne'er as a coward or a slave will I kneel,  
While my guns carry shot, or my belt bears a steel!

Quick! Quick! Trim her sails; let her sheets kiss the wind  
And I warrant we'll soon leave the seagulls behind;  
Up! Up! With my flag! Let it wave o'er the sea!  
I'm afloat! I'm afloat! And the rover is free!

The night gathers o'er us, the thunder is heard;  
What matter, our vessel skims on like a bird;  
What to her is the dash of the storm ridden main?  
She has braved it before, and will brave it again!

The fire-gleaming flashes around us may fall;  
They may strike, they may cleave, but they cannot appal<sup>9</sup>;  
With lightnings [*sic*] above us, and darkness below,  
Through the wild waste of waters right onward we go;

Hurrah! my brave boys, ye may drink, ye may sleep,  
The storm fiend is hushed, we're alone on the deep –  
Our flag of defiance still waves o'er the sea,  
Hurrah! boys hurrah! the rover is free!

This setting of the once popular Eliza Cook poem entitled “I'm Afloat” (set twice in this collection and reissued three times in poetry collections during her lifetime) catches the attention of the listener by the use of thick piano textures and frequent fermatas. These elements make the song stand out from other pirate songs of this period. Whereas many others contain a rollicking, rolling 6/8 motion, the movement of this

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<sup>9</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

melody, set here in common time, is disrupted by the many fermatas, which create both interest and unrest. These fermatas, placed around such texts as, “I’m afloat and the rover is free” and “I fear not the Monarch, I heed not the law,” illustrate the “freedom” the pirate has from the law, from society, from time, and perhaps from time signatures as well!

The active accompaniment rarely doubles the melody in the voice part and with its ascending and descending sixteenth note arpeggio patterns, aptly portrays the movement of ocean waves tossing against the hull of the ship. The sound of gathering thunder can be heard in the tremolo piano chords, while the sailor sings on, unfazed by its presence. He lingers at a fermata on “the thunder is heard” then flippantly moves on with “what matter, our vessel skims on like a bird.” The three short eighth notes on B $\flat$  at “what matter” are sung glibly, showing that the pirate truly has no concern for the dangers of the sea. He continues, ever confident; “What to her is the dash of the storm ridden main, she has braved it before and can brave it again.” While acting the role of a cocky pirate captain is vital to the successful concert presentation of this piece, this song can be used as a studio teaching tool for the younger singer needing to break out of his shell.

## I'm Afloat, I'm Afloat (1841)

Range: C3 – D4

Music by Henry Russell (1812 – 1900)

Text by Eliza Cook (1818 – 1889)

I'm afloat! I'm afloat! on the fierce rolling tide.  
The ocean's my home, and my bark is my bride!  
Up! up! with the flag! let it wave o'er the sea,  
I'm afloat! I'm afloat! and the rover is free!

I fear not the monarch, I heed not the law;  
I've a compass to steer by, a dagger to draw;  
And ne'er as a coward or a slave will I kneel,  
While my guns carry shot, or my belt bears a steel!

Quick! quick! trim her sails; let her sheets kiss the wind  
And I warrant we'll soon leave the seagulls behind;  
Up! up! with my flag! let it wave o'er the sea!  
I'm afloat! I'm afloat! and the rover is free!

The night gathers o'er us, the thunder is heard;  
What matter, our vessel skims on like a bird;  
What to her is the dash of the storm ridden main?  
She has braved it before, and will brave it again!

The fire-gleaming flashes around us may fall;  
They may strike, they may cleave, but they cannot appal;  
With lightnings above us, and darkness below,  
Through the wild waste of waters right onward we go;

Hurrah! my brave boys, ye may drink, ye may sleep,  
The storm fiend is hushed, we're alone on the deep --  
Our flag of defiance still waves o'er the sea,  
Hurrah! boys hurrah! the rover is free!

In contrast to the John M. White version, Henry Russell's "I'm Afloat" is characterized by its chordal, waltz-like rhythmic patterns in the accompaniment. This setting comes off more as a raucous drinking song than a refined art song. The piano starts off by playing the refrain before the singer enters with the same material.

Easily accessible with its tuneful melody, this folk-like parlor song should be easy to learn even for the young singer looking to extol the virtues of piracy via the recital

hall. The vocal range spans only a ninth and the song's simple strophic form lends itself well to speedy assimilation. The singer should be mindful, though, not to mirror the stresses of the repetitive heavy waltz of the piano found throughout. Instead, he should be encouraged to sing with legato phrasing, contrasting the potentially monotonous accompaniment.

## The Pirate's Serenade (1841)

Range: E3 – F4

Adapted and arranged by Alexander Ball (dates unknown)

Originally composed by John Thomson (1805 – 1841)

Text source unknown

My boat's by the tow'r, my barque's in the bay,  
 And both must be gone ere the dawning of day.  
 The moon's in her shroud, but to guide thee afar,  
 On the deck of the daring's a love lighted star.  
 Then wake lady wake. I am waiting for thee.  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.  
 Then wake, lady wake, I am waiting for thee,  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.

Forgive my rough mood, unaccustom'd to sue,  
 I woo not perhaps as your land lovers woo,  
 My voice has been tuned to the notes of the gun,  
 That startle the deep when the combat's begun.  
 And heavy and hard is the grasp of the hand,  
 Whose glove has been ever the guard of our band.  
 Then wake, lady wake, I am waiting for thee,  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.

Oh! Islands there are on the face of the deep,  
 Where the leaves never change, and the skies never weep,  
 And there if thou wilt, our love bower shall be,  
 When we leave for the greenwood our home on the sea.  
 And there thou shalt sing of the deeds that were done,  
 When we loos'd the last blast and the last battle won.  
 Then wake, lady wake, I am waiting for thee.  
 And this night or never my bride thou shalt be.

Oh! haste, lady haste, for the fair breezes blow,  
 And my ocean bird poises her pinions of snow;  
 Now fast to the lattice these silken cords twine.  
 They are meet for such feet and such fingers as thine!  
 The signal my mates— ho! hurrah! for the sea.  
 This night and forever my bride thou shalt be.  
 The signal my mates— ho! hurrah! for the sea.  
 This night and forever my bride thou shalt be.

Alexander Ball's setting of this text contains a thinner texture in the piano than

John Thomson's earlier setting. Ball may have found the original John Thomson

composition piano part too busy or difficult. His approach is simpler and easier for the singer here. Though, like Thomson, he uses 6/8 meter, the piano's role has been greatly reduced with quarter and eighth note underpinnings instead of the frenetic eighth and sixteenth notes abounding in the original. Here the piano part takes on the character of a mandolin or guitar serenade sound by way of lilting triadic eighth note figures in the right hand.

The singer should remember that though serenade style music is often light and tranquil, intended to woo the listener, the text indicates no time for lollygagging. The pirate attempts to wake the girl, telling her to "haste, lady haste." There is no time to spare for the fighting has begun at sea and he is being beckoned to his ship. He needs his lover to both marry him and set sail with him this very night. With this in mind, the singer is charged with keeping a sense of urgency in the voice while delivering a sweet serenade fit for a bride; a challenging task for some, but quite fitting for a pirate!

## Ho! For a Rover's Life (Song of the Pirate) (1844)

Music and Text by John Hill Hewitt (1801 – 1890)

Range: C3 – F4

Ho! for a rover's life,  
 Battle and stormy strife!  
 Fearless he braves  
 Wild wind and waves,  
 Like a prison'd bird set free!  
 Seeking the stormy deep,  
 Where mountain billows leap,  
 He's the monarch of the sea,  
 The monarch of the sea.

Moor'd in the friendly cove,  
 Oft turn his thoughts to love;  
 The dark-eyed maid,  
 Hears his serenade,  
 And is charm'd by his wild minstrelsy.

Listen sweet maid to thy lover's guitar,  
 While he worships thy beauty, thou bright southern star!  
 Come brave the ocean, belov'd one with me,  
 There's joy on the billows when smil'd on by thee.

A gun is heard!  
 All hands on board,  
 A sail appears out on the sea,  
 And we give her chase right merrily,  
 Hurrah! my boys, our guns tell true,  
 She strikes! Hurrah for the pirate crew!

Ho! for a rover's life,  
 Battle and stormy strife;  
 Fearless he braves  
 Wild wind and waves,  
 A rover's life for me--  
 A rover's life for me.

Thus sung the proud chief of the pirate crew,  
 As his trim schooner danc'd o'er the waters blue;  
 But soon thro' the mist was a warship spied,  
 With her teeth grinning death on either side,  
 "Stand, stand to your guns!-- nail our flag to your mast!"  
 Was the cry of the chief as the thunder roll'd past.  
 He falls!-- while the blood down his pale forehead runs,  
 And his sinking craft groans, he cries "stand to your guns!"

Stand to your guns, my boys,  
Stand to you guns, stand, stand, stand to your guns."

The identifying trait of this pirate song is its variation of musical material. The song is through-composed and aside from a mid-song, six-measure appearance of repeated material from the singer's initial statement, "Ho! for a Rover's Life," each stanza is completely different from the previous. The continually new melodic vocal material, together with the constantly evolving harmonic and rhythmic variation in the piano, provides for an interesting and refreshing experience.

In each separate section, the accompaniment acts as an adventurous backdrop to the spirited vocal melodies. Though never doubling the voice, the piano fully supports it harmonically with the use of blocked and broken triadic statements, waltz-like figures, and flowing arpeggiations.

As the vocalist initially enters, we hear the pirate captain asserting his status as a fearless rover and "Monarch of the Sea." The galloping 6/8 triadic block chords of the accompaniment support the gallant arching melody of the singer as he rises and falls with the movement of his ship. Only sixteen measures later however, his thoughts quickly turn to his beloved. A change in meter takes place as the song shifts from 6/8 to 3/8 time. Here we have the appearance of an 18-measure serenade section in which the pirate lovingly plucks and strums his guitar, which is represented by lilting triplet eighth figures and short eighth-note block chords. As the pirate attempts to persuade his love to come brave the seas with him aboard his vessel, the action is interrupted when suddenly, "A gun is heard!" The time signature transitions back to 6/8 with a four-note doubled octave figure in the piano, signaling the fired shots. What follows is a 12-measure recitative-like

section where the singer, upon spotting another ship, builds suspense by alternating between the first and fifth scale degrees. It's then back to pirate business as the rover proclaims, "All hands on board!" A battle ensues and the captain is mortally wounded in the crossfire. The accompaniment illustrates the moment with a stark texture of quarter note triads on beats 1 and 4. He falls but continues to order his crew to "stand to your guns." The song ends with several repetitions of this command while the piano plays a series of quarter and eighth-note octaves descending by half-step in the bass. One can imagine the falling pitches represent the final moments of the rover's life.

## To the Mast Nail Our Flag (1846)

Range: A3 – E4

Music by Horatio Dawes Hewitt (1829 – 1894)

Text by Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802 – 1838)

To the mast nail our flag, it is dark as the grave,  
 Or the death which it bears while it sweeps o'er the waves;  
 Let our deck clear for action, our guns be prepar'd;  
 Be the boarding-axe sharpen'd, the cimitar [*sic*] bar'd.  
 See the canisters ready, and then bring to me,  
 For the last of my duties, the powder-room key.  
 It shall never be lower'd, the black flag we bear;  
 If the seas be denied us, we'll sweep thro' the air.

Unshared have we left our last victory's prey;  
 It is mine to divide it; and yours to obey;  
 There are shawls that might suit a Sultana's white neck,  
 And pearls that are fair as the arms they will deck;  
 There are flasks which, unseal them, the air will disclose  
 Diametta's fair summer, the home of the rose.  
 I claim not a portion; I ask but as mine –  
 'Tis to drink to our victory – one cup of red wine.

Some fight, 'tis for riches – some fight, 'tis for fame:  
 The first, I despise the last is a name.  
 I fight 'tis for vengeance, I love to see flow,  
 At the stroke of my sabre, the life of my foe.  
 I strike for the memory of long-vanish'd years:  
 I only shed blood, when another shed tears.  
 I come, as the lightning comes, red from above,  
 O'er the race that I loathe, to the battle I love.

This merry pirate piece paints a vivid picture of the daily seafaring life of the buccaneer. The captain of the ship delivers a jaunty exhortation describing the adventures that lie ahead for him and his hardy men. The accompaniment contains a rhythmic pulse comprised of quarter notes in the bass, which form the foundations of the chords that are then realized via graceful triplet figures in the treble. Composed of shorter melodic fragments, which mirror a sense of excitement and urgency, the tempo marking is labeled *con spirito*, (with spirit, vigor, in a lively manner). That said, the song requires from the

singer clear diction, a good sense of rhythm, as well as both buoyancy and sustained energy in the voice. The vocalist must also be sensitive to the repetitive strophic form of the three-stanza song. Judicious interpretive choices in phrasing, dynamics, and diction should be made to produce an effective result.

## Come Maiden with Me (1855)

Range: D3 – G4

Music and Text by Henry Tucker (1826 – 1882)

Come maiden with me o'er the silvery sea,  
My bark is impatiently waiting for thee,  
The bright stars are smiling to see thee appear,  
And the light waves are dancing to welcome thee here;

Cool zephyrs are wooing thy ringlets to come,  
And wanton with them on our own ocean home,  
Where the sea bird shall wake thee when danger is near,  
And their gambols shall teach thee to laugh at thy fear.  
Ah ...

My bark is as swift as the wind, when the deep  
And wild leaping ocean waves rock us to sleep,  
And stout as the billow she stems in her pride,  
To bear thee afar on its bosom my bride;

Her anchor's aweigh for the far coral groves,  
Where the mermaidens sing of their sports and their loves,  
Then linger not here on this dull shore alone,  
For its haunts are unfit for thee, beautiful one.  
Ah ...

And when o'er the waves we are bounding along,  
Ere the land disappears then shall warble a song,  
Of farewell to the scenes we leave joyless behind,  
Whose soft notes shall swell on the wings of the wind;

And its burden shall be as it floats on the breeze,  
Of beauty and love and a life on the seas:  
Then hasten dear maid o'er the star lighted sea,  
My proud bark shall bear thee to freedom with me.

Appropriate for a light lyric tenor voice capable of a high G4, Henry Tucker's "Come Maiden with Me" contains lilting vocal melodies set atop a graceful, if predictable waltz-like accompaniment. With opportunities for three vocal cadenzas, this strutting serenade of persuasion sung by the departing pirate to his love can be quite

showy. Additionally, the often disjunct melodic phrasing requires the singer to be both exacting in pitch and plentiful in breath support.

Beginning in C major, the song makes three changes of key. The first key change appears as an abrupt modulation to the dominant G major, while a second shift occurs later in the middle section to E minor. A final refrain is then stated in the tonic key of G major. These tonal shifts mirror the drama and action of the text appropriately. For example, the first shift to the minor key occurs as the text speaks of the “dangers of the sea.” Likewise, the second verse text in this same musical spot speaks of the dull, haunted shore, which is unfit for a beautiful maid.

## The Rover's Grave (1856)

Range: Eb3 – F4

Music and Text by James Gowdy Clark (1830 – 1897)

They bore him away when the day had fled,  
And the storm was rolling high,  
And they laid him down in his lonely bed,  
By the light of an angry sky,

The lightning flashed and the wild sea lashed  
The shore with its foaming wave,  
And the thunder passed on the rushing blast  
As it howled o'er the rover's grave.

No longer for him like a fearless bird,  
Yon bark floats under the Lee:  
No longer his shout on the gale is heard,  
When its guns peal over the sea.

But near him the white gull builds on high,  
Her nest by the gleaming wave,  
And the heaving billows groan and die,  
On the sands of the rover's grave.

This solemn dirge dating from 1856 emerges as a refreshing departure from the many elegant pirate serenades published around this time. Composer and poet J.G. Clark has successfully crafted an attention-grabbing piece that tonally teases the listener's ears, teetering between the keys of Ab major and F minor but never fully remaining grounded in either one. Nevertheless, it seems that this was exactly the composer's intent. The poetry, reflecting upon the sea burial of a fellow rover, cleverly vacillates between the mournful loss of a comrade in minor and a celebration of the joy and adventure of a life well-lived in the relative major.

Though no tempo indications are given in the score, other clues suggest *lento* or even *grave* to be fitting for this pirate requiem. The rhythmic fabric of the austere waltz-like accompaniment juxtaposed with the stark and solemn melodic material of the vocal

line creates an eerie atmosphere, giving the singer motivation to perform the song with brooding vocal colors. The use of a hushed or *voix mixte* vocal delivery could be especially effective here.

## The Buccaneer (1864)

Range: C3 – G4

Music by Frederick Lablache (1815 – 1887)

Text by Henry Brogham Farnie (1836 – 1889)

Swiftly flies my good bark from the land,  
 And the wild breeze is filling the sail,  
 Rouse below! For I know,  
 The first notes of the gale;  
 And should foemen<sup>10</sup> ask whither we go,  
 And our freebooting craft over haul,  
 They are less I should guess,  
 Than the might of the squall!

So take courage my bold buccaneers,  
 Of your fortune you need have no fears.  
 Then no longer we'll roam  
 From the dear ones at home

Who shall say of the desolate sea,  
 It is barren of field and of fold,  
 For the main hath its grain,  
 And the grain... it is gold,  
 Brawny reapers my comrades are we,  
 And our swords are our sickles I trow,  
 Shall we wait...Autumn late?  
 No! our harvest is now!

So take courage my bold buccaneers,  
 Of your fortune you need have no fears.  
 Then no longer we'll roam  
 From the dear ones at home

This tuneful song is harmonically interesting and refreshingly challenging for the singer. Well-balanced, *ad libitum* passages of reassuring recitative contrast rousing and spirited cantabile sections.

The Henry Farnie text stands out among other songs in this collection in that rather than idealistically romanticizing piracy, the poem hints at piracy as a necessary evil. The men must go to sea to acquire the plunder needed to provide for their families.

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<sup>10</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

Using themes of harvesting crops as an analogy, the singer speaks of the sea not being “barren of field and of fold, for the main has its grain.” He continues saying, “the grain, it is gold” and describes his comrades as “brawny reapers” exclaiming, “our swords are our sickles.” He stresses that rather than waiting for autumn they must reap the harvest now, and that once they are finished with this required task they will no longer roam the seas, but return to life on land with their families.

The galloping 6/8 pulse of the mostly triadic piano accompaniment provides a fitting underpinning for the vocalist. But the song’s spritely melodies made up of mostly dotted eighth and sixteenth note rhythms can also lead a less trained singer to come off the voice. This piece would be best suited for an advanced student with a large range who is both comfortable singing a high G4 and capable of acting out the persuasive nature of the pirate narrator with strength, sincerity, and conviction.

## Song of the Pirate (1870)

Range: D3 – F4

Music and text by Giuseppe Operti (ca. 1853 – 1886)

A fig for your landman's pleasure, if pleasure indeed there's there.  
A fig for his flowers and green fields and boasted woodlands fair.  
For what are his fields compar'd to the boundless ocean green.  
And what are his flow'rs and woodlands, compared to its silver sheen?  
Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho,

Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Hurrah for the open sea,  
With its countless daring pleasures, a pirate's life for me.  
Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Hurrah for the open sea,  
With its countless daring pleasures, a pirate's life for me.

Sometimes when the wind is quiet and water's still and clear,  
I look deep down in the world there and find it the same as here,  
For whilst for some prize two cavil<sup>11</sup> a stronger comes sailing by  
And he settles the question by right and strength and so, ah! ah! do I.  
Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho,

Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Hurrah for the open sea,  
With its countless daring pleasures, a pirate's life for me.  
Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Hurrah for the open sea,  
With its countless daring pleasures, a pirate's life for me.

When the storm is fiercely raging, and the sea with sky contends  
In some quiet bay I safely lay for I know they will soon be friends.  
Then when night sets in why I set out to see what luck change will bring  
And I sail along without fear or doubt whilst merrily I sing.  
Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho,

Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Hurrah for the open sea,  
With its countless daring pleasures, a pirate's life for me.  
Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho, Hurrah for the open sea,  
With its countless daring pleasures, a pirate's life for me.

Subtitled “A Pirate's Life for Me”, Giuseppe Operti composed this swashbuckling monologue in the form of a *da capo* aria. With its rhythmic pulse and dashing poetic language, the song bears a striking resemblance to Arthur Sullivan's, “I am a Pirate

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<sup>11</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

King” from *The Pirates of Penzance*. Interestingly, the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta premiered in 1879, just nine years after Operti’s composition was first published.

Written in 6/8 time, the alternating quarter and eighth rhythms in the piano and voice give the song a continuous galloping cadence, representing the movement of the boat over the open seas. As the ship pushes ever onward, the pirate narrator here conjures up images of seafaring life, describing what he calls its “countless pleasures.” Repeated several times as a cavorting refrain is the phrase “Yo-ho, Yo-ho, Yo-ho, hurrah for the open sea.” Used as a shout or call to attract attention, the origin of the exclamatory remark “Yo-ho” is unknown, but it is here in Operti’s setting published 1870 that the term first appears in a pirate song for solo voice and piano.

## The Corsair (1871)

Range: B3 – E4

Music by William Wright Hill (dates unknown)

My bark is on the moonlit bay,  
The breeze, the breeze has sunk to rest,  
The sandy shore is damp with spray  
Thrown from the billowy breast.

Hark! Hark I hear the signal gun,  
Boom o'er the surging tide,  
The Corsair's band await their Chief  
And I await my bride.  
Tra la la...

My bride is fair as ocean foam,  
My hardy men are brave and true,  
So merry we where e'er I roam  
Faithful to death are my crew.

Hark! Hark I hear the signal gun,  
Boom o'er the surging tide,  
The Corsair's band await their Chief  
And I await my bride.  
Tra la la...

“The Corsair” is quite dramatic in nature, containing a muscular, yet legato baritone vocal line that stands out strong above the open blocked chords of the piano. The ship's pirate captain speaks of his hardy crew and his beautiful bride, commending both for their lasting faithfulness. The compelling descriptions from the speaker are set in a strophic style, each strophe containing three distinct sections. The opening section is set in E minor and contains several long sustained melodic phrases, each four measures in length. In terms of breath support, the singer is challenged to conserve air while still producing a strong and dramatic sound. The second section acts as a kind of choral refrain to the preceding verse. Here the tonality shifts abruptly to a homophonic march-like rhythm set in E major. The corsair sings, “Hark I hear the signal gun, boom o'er the

surging tide,” a fitting refrain for the rather militaristic sounding backdrop of the accompaniment.

The third and final section of the strophe changes character yet again and is marked by a shift from the song’s previous common time meter, to a buoyant 3/8 time. Labeled in the score as *con anima e leggiero*, the pirate sings 16 measures of repeated “tra-la-las” as if capping off his speech with a joyous exclamation mark. Though the range of Hill’s composition extends only as high as an E4, its demands for fortissimo singing, along with the thick texture of the piano with which the singer must contend, makes the song best suited for the advanced baritone voice with a developed and robust timbre. If sung by a younger voice, special attention should be paid to avoid a pushed or strained production.

## The Ocean's King (1876)

Range: B $\flat$ 3 – G4

Arranged by Richard Hoffmann Andrews (1803 – 1891)

Based on tune by Ernst Methfessel (1811 – 1886)

Text by W.H. Baker (dates unknown)

O what care I when skies look dim,  
And clouds are gathering high;  
I smile when stormy petrels skim,  
And warn of dangers nigh.  
My heart is firm tho' loud the blast  
Comes rushing o'er the sea.  
And snaps in twain the stormy mast  
While breakers threat our lee.

Then messmates, drink, and pledge in wine,  
The black flag on the foaming brine.

My cheek ne'er pales when white squalls dash,  
Huge waves against my bark.  
I mock the glare when light'nings flash,  
And rocks ahead I mark;  
From well manned ship the sight I love  
I'll ever scorn to flee;  
And while my seadogs faithful prove,  
The ocean king I'll be.

Then messmates, drink, and pledge in wine,  
The black flag on the foaming brine.

“The Ocean's King” is an extolment to piracy. The narrator praises the buccaneer's way of life and sings the repeated refrain, “Then messmates, drink, and pledge in wine, the black flag on the foaming brine.” This rousing toast from the singer is meant to persuade the crew to take an oath and vow their allegiance to the Jolly Roger.

Though written in simple strophic form, the song contains a busy and varied accompaniment in B $\flat$  major. Arpeggiations of diatonic chords, homophonic blocked chords, and melodic solo lines are all features of the accompaniment. The vocal melody is active as well, outlining chords with its own skips and leaps, which require an exacting

pitch from the singer. Keeping in mind the highest pitch is a G4, this diverse and broad-ranged song is best suited for a soloist with vocal flexibility.

## The Pirate's Prayer (1876)

Range: B3 – G4

Music by Augusta Mary Wakefield (1853 – 1910)

Text by M.H.W.

A pirate ship rode over the sea,  
 But the sea was stormy and white with foam,  
 Her masts were gone, and the crew they knew  
 'Twas but a chance if they ever reach'd home,  
 The lightning darted from cloud to cloud,  
 Long lurid shapes in that hurrying sky:  
 The Captain gazed on that angry scene,  
 And felt that ere morning, they all must die.

He had roamed the seas as a little lad,  
 He was known as a pirate fierce and wild,  
 His hearts was hard save one tender spot,  
 The love that he bore to his wife and child,  
 The thought of those dear ones dimmed his eyes,  
 He had never prayed, then how could he now?  
 But for love of his wife and child he cried,  
 "Oh God save us poor perishing men."  
 "Oh God save us, Oh God save us, O God save us.

When morning dawned, the ship was in shore,  
 And his wife and his child were waiting there,  
 And he said as he clasped them to his breast,  
 "I will serve the God that answers prayer,  
 God answers Prayer."

Mary Wakefield was a composer and music philanthropist known for her work in the inception of the competitive choral music festival movement in England in the 1880's.<sup>12</sup> Wakefield's "The Pirate's Prayer" was published in 1876 and is one of three compositions in this pirate song collection that centers on the theme of turning to God in times of trouble. These pirate-turned-law-abiding-Christian texts are interesting in that while they begin as songs extolling the virtues of piracy, they eventually transform into life lessons, informing the listener as to the merits of a clean, Christian lifestyle.

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<sup>12</sup> Gordon Cox, *Sir Arthur Somervell on Music Education: His Writings, Speeches and Letters* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003), 15-16.

The narrator begins by recounting a heavy storm that has overtaken a pirate crew and its captain. As the voice enters, the undulating current of the sea can be heard in the E $\flat$  major piano accompaniment with expansive rolling arpeggios in the right hand, punctuated by quarter notes of open fifths and octaves in the left. Throughout the song the vocal melody rises and falls fittingly as well, outlining the sonorities of chords and executing several wide leaps of sixths, octaves, and tenths.

The second section begins with a sudden shift to C major. The piano rhythmically mimics the voice in a homophonic texture set to the repeating pulse of one quarter note followed by two eighth notes. This 16-measure segment provides, textually, the historical background of the pirate and how he came to be a family man.

What follows is a moment that stands out of character with the rest of the piece. The song's previous forward motion ceases and it is replaced by *piano*, rolled half-note major chords, positioned vertically under sustained half notes in the voice. As the piano depicts the heavenly sound of singing harps, the singer prays aloud with a thrice-repeated statement of, "Oh God save us." Then, as it began, the E $\flat$  major material from the song's opening is restated, rounding out its ternary form. It is now apparent that the captain and his men have been granted their salvation and as the ship docks ashore, the pirate's family is seen awaiting his arrival. Upon their embrace, he thankfully cries out, "I will serve the God that answers prayer."

## The Pirate (1881)

Range: B3 – F#4

Music by Adolphe Devin-Duvivier (1827 – 1909?)

Text by William Alexander Barrett (1834 – 1891)

Adapted from “Chant de Pirates” by Victor Marie Hugo (1802 – 1885)

We roam the wide and boundless billows,  
Free as air, and careless as free,  
No landsman half so safe as we,  
When he lays his head on his pillow.  
Away! my daring messmates bold,  
Come clear the decks, and off be swinging,

Light is our ship, like bird ever winging,  
Light our hearts and as true as gold.

Then perchance by some far distant village  
We cast our anchor safe once more,  
Quelling our joy as we steal o’er the shore,  
Away we start in quest of pillage.  
Back we row, and if truth be told  
Perhaps a captive maid we’re bringing,

Light is our ship, like bird ever winging,  
Light our hearts and as true as gold.

Clear the decks, make fast, for the fray’s now dawning,  
A sail bears on our path to trace;  
The master shouts out, “now for a chase.”  
On we fly all danger scorning,  
We show our flag, our grapnels<sup>13</sup> hold,  
While o’er her decks our shot is ringing,

Light is our ship, like bird ever winging,  
Light our hearts and as true as gold.

Composed entirely in the key of B minor, the three strophic stanzas follow closely to the story line of Victor Hugo’s poem, “Chant de Pirates”, depicting the pirate as both romantic hero and sinister antagonist. In this setting, the speaker is the pirate himself who

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<sup>13</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

describes the dastardly deeds in which he and his men undertake. A refrain closes out each verse wherein the singer exclaims, “Light our hearts, and as true as gold.”

At times, melodic material is shared in the voice and piano. In other instances, the accompaniment supports the pomp and pageantry of the lyrically legato pirate monologue with a “boom-chick” march of broken chords. The singer is given the task of executing the many vocal turns and grace notes found within and should be sensitive to the score’s dynamic contrasts, which speak appropriately to the text. For example, in the beginning of the second stanza, the singer is instructed to sing *sotto voce*, while the accompaniment is marked *ppp*. The music is matched well to the text as it describes the pirates sneaking up on a distant village in search for plunder and women.

## The Bosun's Log (1883)

Range: C3 – D4

Music and text by Michael Watson (1840 – 1889)

May hap ye've heard o' pirates, lads, the vampires of the sea,  
Well, I'll tell ye something 'bout 'em, if ye'll list a while to me:  
I'll tell ye how the British fleet a nest, one day, destroy'd  
An' well I mind how all aboard, the glorious fun enjoy'd.  
I was a bo'sun<sup>14</sup> o' the "Rodney" an' it's nigh on sev'nty years,  
Since our Adm'ral gave the word to sail, an' polish off Algiers.  
"To free the Christian slaves, my lads, is now says he, "our task,"  
An' how we set about it, why, ye needn't surely ask.

For British tars 'an British ships wherever they may be,  
Will always fight for liberty an' set the slaveys free,  
Ahoy! Lads, ahoy! Be ye white or be ye black,  
There's room for all, The great, the small, Beneath the Union Jack!

We anchor'd just outside the forts, the ships lay broadside to,  
An' then we gave them pepper to the dastard pirate crew:  
For full six hours we kept it up, an' blaz'd an' blaz'd a away,  
Until, at last he struck his flag, this craven hearted Dey<sup>15</sup>.  
So all the Christian slaves my lads, were then an' there set free  
An' the joy o' them poor creatures, lor', it was a sight to see;  
We took 'em all aboard our ships, then homeward we set sail,  
An brought 'em safe to England, boys, with scarce a storm or gale.

For British tars 'an British ships wherever they may be,  
Will always fight for liberty an' set the slaveys free,  
Ahoy! Lads, ahoy! Be ye white or be ye black,  
There's room for all, The great, the small, Beneath the Union Jack!

Among the lot was one young girl, in figure taut an' trim,  
An, she fell ill aboard my ship, an faded, like, quite slim;  
An' when we got to England, an' they paid off all our crew,  
I carried her ashore lads; poor little black-eye'd Sue.  
An' if ye want to know as how what came o that young lass,  
Ye'd better let her tell ye all how things have come to pass,  
For there she is, my dear old wife, as happy as can be,  
An' that's her boy the rascal an' his father, well, that's me.

For British tars 'an British ships wherever they may be,  
Will always fight for liberty an' set the slaveys free,  
Ahoy! Lads, ahoy! Be ye white or be ye black,

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<sup>14</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

There's room for all, The great, the small, Beneath the Union Jack!

“The Bosun’s Log” is atypical of the majority of songs in this collection in that it speaks of piracy not by pirates, but from the point of view of an officer in the British Fleet. The text is also significant in that it addresses the themes of both anti-slavery and interracial marriage’s acceptance.

Grounded in C major and composed in a strophic-binary form, the song’s three verses are written in common time while the repeated refrain following each verse is set in 6/8 time. The tuneful vocal melody is mostly conjunct but nevertheless dances rhythmically through the song as it sways to tempo markings labeled *vivace* and *con spirito*.

As the boatswain recounts the adventures of battling pirates and setting free the slaves of Algiers, one can’t help but think of the song as a recruitment tune for the British Navy. He finishes his sales pitch with flair. “Ahoy lads! Be ye white or be ye black, there’s room for all, the great, the small, beneath the Union Jack!” Pitched in an easily achievable range of a major 9<sup>th</sup>, this song is appropriate for any male singer so long as they are of an appropriate age to relate a story of marriage and fatherhood.

## The Last Buccaneer (1884)

Range: A3 – E4

Music by Charles H. Ferrero (d. 1914)

Text by Thomas Babington Macaulay (1880 – 1859)

The winds were yelling, the waves were swelling,  
 The sky was black and drear,  
 When the crew with eyes of flame brought the ship without a name  
 Alongside the last Buccaneer.  
 Whence flies your sloop full sail before so fierce a gale,  
 When all others drive bare on the seas?  
 Say, come ye from the shore of the holy Salvador,  
 Or the gulf of the rich Caribbees?

From a shore no search hath found, from a gulf no line can sound,  
 Without rudder or needle we steer;  
 Above below our bark dies the sea fowl and the shark,  
 As we fly by the last Buccaneer.  
 Tonight there shall be heard on the rocks of Cape de Verde,  
 A loud crash, and a louder roar.  
 And tomorrow shall the deep, with a heavy moaning, sweep  
 The corpses and wreck to the shore.

From St Jago's wealthy port, from Havannah's royal fort,  
 The seaman goes forth without a fear,  
 For since that stormy night, not a mortal hath had sight  
 Of the flag of the last Buccaneer.

This dramatic setting of “The Last Buccaneer” is filled with various musical devices that create interest and draw the listener into its epic storyline. The song’s formal structure is ABABC. The A sections are in 2/4 time and centered in E minor, while the B sections are in 4/4 time and grounded in the parallel E major. The C section continues in E major and serves as a vocal coda written in 12/8 time. The piano accompaniment is orchestral in nature featuring broad and varied styles: bravura interludes, chromatic block chords, rhythmic motives, and descending scalar passages sometimes doubling and tripling the voice, are all used to provide the piece with a sense of theatrical flair.

Though the vocal line extends only as high as an E4, the song's overall performance demands are varied. From the declamatory shouted commands and unexpected intervallic leaps to the light, lyric *bel canto* melodies and recitative-like articulation, the song offers many opportunities for the vocalist to display vocal dexterity and variety.

## A Piratical Ballad (1891)

Range: F#2 – E4

Music by Henry Waller (1864 – ?)

Text by Young Ewing Allison (1853 – 1932)

Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!  
 Drink and the devil had done for the rest—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!  
 The mate was fixed by the Bo's'n's pike,  
 The Bo's'n brained with a marlinspike,  
 And Cookey's throat was marked belike  
 It had been gripped by fingers ten.  
 And there they lay, all good dead men—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum,  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men all stark and cold—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!  
 Their eyes popp'd wide and glazed and bold—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!  
 The skipper lay with his nob in gore  
 Where the scullion's axe his cheek had shore,  
 And the scullion he was stabbed times four.  
 And there they lay, and the soggy skies  
 Rained all day long on the staring eyes—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum,  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men of the Vixen's list—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!  
 All gone down from the devil's own fist—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!  
 We wrapped 'em all in a mainsail's fold,  
 We sewed at the foot a bit of gold,  
 And we heaved 'em into the billows cold.  
 The bit was put as snug's could be,  
 Where't ne'er will bother you nor me—  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum,  
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

The 1891 poem, "A Piratical Ballad" contains three stanzas penned by poet Young E. Allison at the urging of his composer-friend Henry Waller. The first quatrain was actually written by Robert Louis Stevenson for his 1883 novel *Treasure Island*.

Waller and Young were so compelled by the grisly charm of Stevenson's refrain, that they felt determined to finish it. However, the three stanzas that appear in published song form here are but a rough draft of sorts. Over the next five years, Allison reworked and revised the ragged text, adding three more stanzas. He eventually completed the epic poem and renamed it, "Derelict". The three foundational verses found here are cleverly set, providing graphic images of the pirates' dreadful fates.

Composed in E minor as a solo for bass or deep baritone, the range of Henry Waller's strophic setting is extremely low in both the voice and accompaniment. The song's meter is in 6/8 time and contains the tempo indication, *allegretto pesante*. The piano begins with a heavy, swaying melodic motive in the right hand, underpinned by deep alternating pedal tones and octave figures in the left. The voice then enters, restating the melody in full, and continues with the weighty atmosphere of the text. The low pitches in the left hand of the piano continue to ebb and sway, like the eerie rocking of the boat upon the water. Continuing on, the depictions of gruesome death and bloody gore are realized in the text via descending chromatic vocal sequences. It soon becomes obvious to the listener that the story will not turn out well for anyone.

Finally, at the end of the third stanza, a last dramatic fortissimo "Yo-ho-ho and bottle of rum" is sung and the piano closes with its own downward concluding statement. This four-measure postlude contains melodic elements from the opening measures and aptly illustrates the sinking of the dead bodies as they descend into the billowy depths of the sea.

## The Pirate (1899)

Range: G2 – C4

Music and Text by Chancellor L. Jenks Jr. (1863 – 1937)

I am a pirate bold, with wealth untold;  
 The rolling seas pay toil to me,  
 And owns my royal sway.  
 On ev'ry rolling tide my black ships ride,  
 And gather more for my rich store,  
 From all who may pass our way,  
 My vessels are manned by a gallant band, and brave.  
 We know no home but the dashing foam and wave.

Oh who would a landsman be,  
 We ask for the rolling sea.  
 I am a pirate bold with, wealth untold;  
 The rolling seas pay toil to me, the rolling sea.

The tempest's angry voice makes me rejoice;  
 The raging sea fills me with glee,  
 I laugh its wrath to scorn.  
 For ev'ry roaring blast but hurries fast,  
 To drive to me from angry sea,  
 Fresh booty tempest-torn.  
 So what care I how angry the sky or wave.  
 I'll rule on the sea until it shall be my grave.

Oh who would a landsman be,  
 We ask for the rolling sea.  
 I am a pirate bold with, wealth untold;  
 The rolling seas pay toil to me, the rolling sea.

The principal melodic material of this solo for bass voice is stated first by the piano through an *allegretto con spirito* six-measure introduction in C major. As the voice enters, it restates the melody, singing in a completely syllabic style while the piano plays a more subordinate role. Marked *sempre marcato*, the piano provides fitting harmonic support via homophonic quarter note block chords, which mostly double the melody. Suddenly, there is an abrupt shift to the parallel C minor as the singer recalls the brave and gallant men in his crew. In the same musical material of the second strophic verse, he

proclaims his defiance to the angry sky and waves. Later, a melismatic vocal passage of dotted eighth and sixteenth notes appears and spans two full measures, suggesting the “roll-ing sea” in the text. Ending on a half cadence, the piano pauses as the singer provides the pickup into the *a tempo* section of the final triumphant refrain.

With regard to the text, the pirate sings unabashedly of his power over the sea. This glorified attitude comes off as a complete exaggeration of his role in life as he proclaims, “The rolling sea pays toll to me!” Overall, “The Pirate” is well-suited for the intermediate or advanced bass voice capable of handling the many low G2 pitches as well as the melismatic passage of the middle section.

## The Buccaneer (1900 – 12?)

Range: F2 – C4

Music and Text by Arthur Chanter (fl.1898 – 1941)

I sing of a bold bad buccaneer  
 Who roamed the tropic seas.  
 Held up all honest merchantmen  
 And pilfered as he'd please,  
 All skippers he'd at the yardarm swing,  
 Made sailors walk the plank  
 Oh a buccaneer bold and bad was he  
 Who smoked and laughed and drank.

One afternoon a well armed craft  
 To the star-board hove in sight.  
 Said he, "That ship will soon be mine,  
 Or nevermore my pipe I'll light."  
 He opened fire but she replied  
 In hotter blaze than he.  
 Then he turned tail clapped on all sail  
 And cursed her full and free.

For mutineers he had a way  
 To treat without remorse  
 He'd slice and salt and barrel them  
 And sell 'em as salt horse.  
 Ha! Ha! Said he they'll learn from me  
 At swaggering I'll teach 'em  
 I'll broadside rake and rattle them  
 To finish off I'll beach 'em.

As years rolled on his riches grew  
 He roamed no more the seas  
 But settled down in Plymouth Town  
 To enjoy himself in ease.  
 Now most respected man is he,  
 On Sunday sings and prays  
 A model citizen all say  
 And so he'll end his days.

"The Buccaneer" contains a tuneful, mostly syllabic vocal melody, as the narrative paints a picture of a ruthless captain who will let nothing stand in the way of his plunder. However, it is interesting that much of the wickedness is acted out in a major

key. Another noteworthy aspect of the composition is the whimsical repetition of the final phrase in each stanza; a feature also employed in many Gilbert and Sullivan compositions of the day. A familiar example of this appears in the Major-General's song from *The Pirates of Penzance*. Major General Stanley ends his first verse singing "...with many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse." The ensemble repeats with tongue-twisting approval.

Ternary in overall form, Chanter includes a repeated A section at the onset of the song containing the text for verses one and two. The appearance of the middle B section is marked by a clever direct phrase modulation from F major to A minor, making use of a mid-measure pause. Using a repeated rhythmic gesture in the accompaniment, the E major chord (dominant in the new key) is restated, setting up the move from F major to its chromatic mediant at the major third above; A minor. This pause and subsequent modulation fittingly sets up the darker tone for the text, which speaks of the evil nature of the pirate captain as he is forced to deal with a mutiny on board the ship. Giving no quarter, the skipper quells the uprising by slaughtering his crew and selling them as barreled, salted horsemeat. Though the lyrics are ruthless here, the accompaniment continues its triadic boom-chick accompaniment, maintaining a somewhat light-hearted atmosphere. The captain laughs too, as he sings a syllabic singsong minor melody, containing a monotonous rhythm of rising and falling vocal inflections, eventually modulating back to F major on the words, "To finish off I'll beach 'em."

As the final A section appears, the score indicates *a little slower*, for the pirate has gotten on in years. Now a respected man and model citizen, he no longer roams the seas but instead has settled down, learning to enjoy his life with ease. He even attends church

to sing and pray! All in all, “The Buccaneer” is clever in its poetry and musical delivery. It contains a fitting range for the young singer and seasoned performer alike and the song’s wicked sense of humor is sure to please the receptive audience.

## Davy Jones' Locker (1901)

Range: Eb2 – Eb4

Music and text by Henry W. Petrie (1857 – 1925)

Ho! there, know ye the dangers that lie,  
 Out where white crested waves roll high?  
 There's where mermaids and sea serpents creep,  
 There's where Davy Jones rules the deep.  
 Heed not the call brave rover,  
 Wait till the storm be over.  
 Deep, down deep  
 Sailors sleep,  
 While tempests roar on the sea, on the shore.

Davy Jones calls all the tars to his locker,  
 Davy Jones, greets them with jeers and with laughter,  
 Have a care, sailors who brave the hereafter,  
 Or thy bones will go to Davy Jones!

Ho! there, fly from the man of the sea,  
 Always watching for slaves is he.  
 Ho! there, lost are the sailors who go,  
 Down where Davy Jones waits below.  
 Happy is he to sever,  
 True loving hearts forever,  
 Peace to thee,  
 Lost at sea  
 While tempests roar, slumber on, evermore.

Davy Jones calls all the tars to his locker,  
 Davy Jones, greets them with jeers and with laughter,  
 Have a care, sailors who brave the hereafter,  
 Or thy bones will go to Davy Jones!

Composed for baritone or bass, the descriptive and colorful “Davy Jones’ Locker” is a fitting performance piece for the male singer possessing a solid low Eb2. The lyric and tuneful vocal melody is doubled in the piano at all times making it quickly and easily learned. Beginning in C minor, the song serves as a warning to rovers who are tempted to sail during stormy weather because Davy Jones, the personified spirit of the bottom of the sea, is lurking below ready to take any seaman to his watery grave. The refrain modulates

to E $\flat$  major and contains a tonal sequence of three melodic phrases rising in pitch to convey a heightened sense of drama. As the poem concludes with “thy bones will go to Davy Jones!” the vocal melody descends stepwise, landing with a thud on a low E $\flat$ 2.

## Pirate Song (1902)

Range: C3 – G4

Music by Henry F. Gilbert (1868 – 1928)

Text adapted from *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894)

Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.  
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.  
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.

Hate lies close to love of gold.  
Dead men's secrets are tardily told.  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.  
Dead men only the secret shall keep  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.  
So bare the knife and plunge it deep.  
Yo! ho! ho! Yo! ho! Yo! ho! ho!

Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum.  
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,  
Yo! ho! ho and a bottle of rum,  
Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,  
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,  
Yo! ho! ho! Yo! ho! Yo! ho! ho!

Henry F. Gilbert's "Pirate Song" was immensely popular and was even performed for President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House. American baritone David Bispham (one of the first American-born baritones to have an international career in opera) wrote to Gilbert about the song: "You may say from me that since Damrosch's 'Danny Deever' no song by an American composer has so profoundly moved my audiences, whether at home or abroad as your 'Pirate Song'."<sup>16</sup> This modified strophic song adapts the text from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), with additional stanzas written

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<sup>16</sup> Sherrill V. Martin, *Henry F. Gilbert: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 253.

by Alice C. Hyde, and evokes sensations of wild glamour associated with pirate lifestyle. The singer addresses the themes of drinking, death, and wickedness in a bold, declamatory style. Though mostly diatonic in nature the vocal line does contain some unexpected chromatic turns with its frequent disjunct melody (“Dead men only the secret shall keep”) and angular leaps (“Yo Ho Ho and a Bottle of Rum”).

In the piano accompaniment, the harmonization embellishes the diatonic melody and also contains a number of dissonances and dynamic contrasts used to heighten the dramatic effect. This rollicking piece complete with its unexpected modulations, strange intervals, and high G (on the final “Yo Ho!”), is well-suited as a show opener or closer and demands sustained energy and exuberance from the singer.

## The Pirate Bold (1903)

Range: A3 – E4

Music by David Dick Slater (1869 – 1942)

Text by Edward Teschemacher (1876 – 1940)

This is the song of the pirate bold  
Who sailed the seas in the days of old;  
His smile was grim and his hair was black,  
And he loved a ship on the homeward tack,  
Did the pirate bold.

He laughed, “Ha ha!” and a song he sung,  
When the yardarm creaked and his victims hung;  
And the dreadful life he seemed lead,  
If all is true that today we read  
Of the pirate bold.

He laughed, “Ha ha, ha, ha!” and a song he sung,  
When the yardarm creaked and his victims hung;  
And the terrible life he seemed lead,  
If all is true that today we read  
Of the pirate bold.

Beware, beware when the night is black,  
The pirate bold is on your track;  
He’ll do for you and your good ship too,  
The pirate bold.

Beware, beware when the night is black,  
The pirate bold is on your track;  
He’ll do for you and your good ship too,  
So you’d better do for him before he does for you,  
The pirate bold.

This is the song of the pirate bold,  
Who sailed the seas in the days of old;  
You let him win, ‘twas the safest plan,  
For if you didn’t then the fun began  
With the pirate bold.

When he caught a maid with golden hair,  
He carried her off to his island fair;  
And there she dwelt in a castle grim,  
And made it most unpleasant for him  
That pirate bold.

Beware, beware when the night is black,  
The pirate bold is on your track;  
He'll do for you and your good ship too,  
So you'd better do for him before he does for you,  
The pirate bold.

Like similar songs composed around this time, the “The Pirate Bold” condemns piracy, warning of its evil nature. However, it also puts the pirate into a historical perspective by saying, “This is a song of a pirate bold, who sailed the seas in the days of old.” The line is sung mysteriously with a hushed *piano* melody in A minor. The voice and accompaniment gradually crescendo to *forte* as the stanza is completed, and the refrain begins in the parallel A major. This formula is followed in each verse of the song's overall strophic-binary form.

The main outstanding feature of “The Pirate Bold” is its rhythm. Set syllabically, the quick, but buoyant vocal melody lies atop rhythmic ostinatos in the piano. The two parts interplay to create an elegant dance in 2/4 that at the same time produces a driving sense of urgency. This wide-ranged song could be sung by any singer, young or advanced, male or female, and serves as a brilliant and vivid way to either begin or end a set or program.

## Jolly Roger (1904)

Range: F2 – E $\flat$ 4

Music by Henry Kimball Hadley (1871 – 1937)

Text by Ethel Watts Mumford (1876 – 1940)

Ho! they ride the purple seas  
 To the singing of the Trade,  
 And their prows they rush and cleave  
 Like a flashing cutlass blade;  
 They are fair and arrogant  
 As any queenly maid,  
 And they're riding down to Davy Jones  
 Before the singing of Trade.

And we're waiting, waiting, waiting  
 On the purple Spanish Main,  
 We are waiting for the galleons,  
 The galleons of Spain,  
 The tow'ring, flaunting galleons,  
 The golden-weighted galleons,  
 The golden-freighted galleons of Spain.

Ho! their decks they shall run red  
 To the singing of the Trade,  
 And the flames shall flash and gleam  
 On the bloody cutlass blade;  
 They shall sue in trembling helplessness  
 Like any frightened maid,  
 As they go down deep to Davy Jones  
 Beneath the singing Trade.

And we're waiting, waiting, waiting  
 On the purple Spanish Main,  
 We are waiting for the galleons,  
 The galleons of Spain,  
 The tow'ring, flaunting galleons,  
 The golden-weighted galleons,  
 The golden-freighted galleons of Spain.

Now the ships they sail no more  
 To the singing of the Trade,  
 They shall leave no trace behind them  
 Of the passing that they made,  
 And none shall know where far below  
 Their blackened hulls are laid,  
 While we ride on to Davy Jones  
 Before the singing Trade.

They'll be waiting, waiting, waiting  
 Far across the shining Main,  
 They'll be waiting for the galleons  
 In far, sunny Spain,  
 For the tow'ring, flaunting galleons,  
 The golden-weighted galleons,  
 The golden-weighted galleons  
 That never come again!

The strophic “Jolly Roger” is an account of pirates who prey upon unsuspecting Spanish galleons attempting to traverse the open sea. The rovers’ sing the rollicking refrain, “We’re waiting, waiting, waiting on the purple Spanish Main.” When the buccaneers eventually do attack, they spare not a soul, sending everyone including the ships, down to a watery grave. There is a clever textual twist in the final refrain as the words are changed ever so slightly to “They’ll be waiting, waiting, waiting... in far, sunny Spain,” alluding to the fact that the galleons will never reach home.

Set in G minor with a compound 12/8 meter, the song has a very broad feel. The monosyllabic vocal line is doubled nearly throughout the whole song with the exception being the third verse. Verse three begins *poco lento* in E $\flat$  minor and contains an eight-measure section that is completely out of character with the rest of the song. Set atop alternating augmented, major, and diminished chords in the piano, the soloist navigates wide intervallic leaps as he sings the dirge-like passage, “Now the ships they sail no more to the sighing of the Trade.” This melodic rising and falling against the chromatic accompaniment paints an eerie picture of the sinking Spanish vessel.

In this story, the character of the ruthless pirate prevails. This is a departure from the many songs describing the jovial and carefree buccaneer wanting only a life of freedom on the open sea. It too is a far cry from the early elegant pirate serenades, sung

to by the handsome hero to his lover. These pirates mean business and are meant to be taken seriously. "Jolly Roger" illustrates the brutal and merciless ways of pirates throughout history and is appropriate for singers of all levels.

## The Pirate's Bride (1905 – 20?)

Range: G2 – E4

Music and text by Muriel Hanson (dates unknown)

The Pirate gazed o'er the ocean wide  
 And watched his ship on the wild waves ride.  
 Tho' deep as the valleys and high as hills  
 They trouble her not as the great sail fills.  
 And he cried, "No woman my bride shall be  
 For who can compare on the land or sea  
 With thee for beauty and strength and grace  
 Or who so brave when dangers face?"  
 Then the pirate crew and their captain sing  
 Sending their song along with a swing.

We're sailing free o'er the wild rough waves  
 Caring not if they are our waves.  
 For the Pirate's Bride our ship shall be  
 And we are the rovers of the sea.

The pirate gazed on the dark, dark night.  
 Hearing no sound and seeing no light.  
 And knowing not now where the rocks might be.  
 Out in the storm on a wide wild sea;  
 And he cried, "Oh! ship we look to thee  
 To save us now on this stormy sea!"  
 But she heard him not for on a rock  
 She struck with a sickening shock.  
 And now no more shall the pirates sing  
 Sending their song along with swing.

We're sailing free o'er the wild rough waves  
 Caring not if they are our waves.  
 For the Pirate's Bride our ship shall be  
 And we are the rovers of the sea.

Written in C major and compound 12/8 time, the simple vocal line of "The Pirate's Bride" is continuously doubled either in the right or left hand of the piano. The accompaniment also relies heavily on repeated block chord eighth note rhythms on the off-beat which give the song its "boom-chick-chick" feel.

The poetry begins with an overconfident pirate and his proud fellow rovers proclaiming their love for the ship they sail as it bounds over the rough seas. The song's ABA'B verse-refrain form is interesting in that the second appearance of the A section begins in C minor. It is at this moment that the story takes a turn for the worse. The personified pirate's boat (the *bride*) collides with a rock causing irreparable damage. An attention-grabbing use of alliteration occurs when the pirate sings to a descending (sinking) melody, "She struck with a sick'ning shudd'ring shock." The accompaniment plays a descending pattern of chords mirroring the severity of the situation as the pirate's fates are sealed. Finally, following a dramatic pause, the closing refrain labeled *a tempo primo* begins albeit with a slightly altered lyric. "And now no more shall the pirates sing."

## Pirate Story (1906)

Range: C4 – D5

Music by Sidney Homer (1864 – 1953)

Text by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894) from *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
 Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
 Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
 And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
 Wary of the weather and steering by a star?  
 Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
 To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea—  
 Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
 Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
 The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

The poem, “Pirate Story” from Robert Louis Stevenson’s larger collection entitled *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), holds a prominent place in the pirate song repertoire. Published by at least six different composers, the beautifully simple text enlivens the imagination of the reader. These settings offer a more sophisticated subset within the larger pirate song library.

This first musical setting of “Pirate Story” was written in 1906 by composer Sidney Homer. A quick and lively piece (*Allegro, with grace and merriment*); the vocal line along with a frequently staccato accompaniment captures the playful, childlike quality of the text. However, this playful nature belies the intricacy of the piece, which is often chromatic and rhythmically complex, due mostly to the syncopated nature of the piano accompaniment.

Homer deviates from a strict setting of the “Pirate Story” text, sequencing and repeating the last two lines, “Quick, and we’ll escape them...” Still, the work retains a

high standard of artistic integrity and should be considered when planning a set of pirate-themed songs. With a limited mid-voice range and varied dynamic and tempo indications, this setting provides an ideal piece for the advancing singer working on interpretive skills.

## The Pirate (1908)

Range: F2 – D4

Music by Henry W. Petrie (1857 – 1925)

Text by Rene Bronner (fl. 1905 – 1937)

I sail the seas in a raging gale, no fear of danger have I,  
 Though lives have sped, and hearts have bled, I heed no cry.  
 I ride thro' storms on the briny deep and laugh their danger to dare,  
 A maiden's true love in my heart to keep, why should I care?  
 Tender and true her devotion for me she'll keep,  
 While I am far o'er the ocean so dark and deep.  
 Tho' I am but a wild Viking, my heart is true,  
 When a fair maid's to my liking, love's gentle touches are striking  
 Lightly the heart strings that echo sweet strains from a heart of gold.  
 Gaily I go, fearing no foe, for I am a pirate, and bold.

Here me lads, I will tell of a lass I love well,  
 While the winds o'er the sea are a blowing,  
 In my heart's darkest place shines the light of her face,  
 With a longing of days to be.  
 As I gaze o'er the crest toward the bright golden west  
 Where the clouds in the sunlight are glowing,  
 I can see a dear home, far way o'er the foam,  
 Where I know that my sweetheart is waiting for me,  
 Tho' I am a pirate who sails o'er the sea.

A pirate's love for the boundless sea is always fearless and true,  
 His stories bold are always told of days he knew,  
 No fear of danger e'er fills his heart, no storm too dark for sight,  
 The morn's rosy dawning holds not the glow of darkest night.  
 Love's gentle hand is still guiding my life to keep,  
 While on the waves I am riding the stormy deep.  
 Out on the deep bounding ocean I fear no foe,  
 Love fills my heart with emotion, beating with ceaseless devotion,  
 Longing to see my sweet lassie who's waiting with heart of gold.  
 Gaily I ride over the tide, for I am a pirate bold.

Here me lads, I will tell of a lass I love well,  
 While the winds o'er the sea are a blowing,  
 In my heart's darkest place shines the light of her face,  
 With a longing of days to be.  
 As I gaze o'er the crest toward the bright golden west  
 Where the clouds in the sunlight are glowing,  
 I can see a dear home, far way o'er the foam,  
 Where I know that my sweetheart is waiting for me,  
 Tho' I am a pirate who sails o'er the sea.

The poetry of Rene Bronner illustrates the dichotomy of the pirate. The text emphasizing his roughness while at sea, but also shows his tender side as he lovingly reminisces about his fair loving maid. Fittingly, the tonality of the song alternates between D minor and F major.

“The Pirate” begins with the accompaniment stating the melody, but as the voice enters, the piano plays a lesser role providing more chordal support. As the verse continues into its second quatrain, the accompaniment begins doubling the vocal line, sometimes adding a second line of harmony. In 6/8 meter the accompaniment gives the song a lilting quality reflecting the sentimental nature of the pirate by way of quarter note accents on beats 1 and 4, alternating with unaccented eighth notes on beats 3 and 6.

The voice has an extensive range of an octave and a sixth and its syllabic melodies contain large intervallic skips outlining the harmonic progressions of the piano. Combined, these elements require flexibility and precise pitch from the singer. Moreover, the vocal phrases are long, sweeping, and expansive. In order to maintain the legato line, a consistent flow of breath is required from the singer. In the refrain section, the piano not only triples the melody in the right hand, but contains a very thick texture of chordal harmonies in the left. The accompanist must some show restraint here, so as not to cover the singer.

## Ward, The Pirate (1908)

Range: D3 – E4

Trad. collected and set with accompaniment  
by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1870 – 1909)

Come all you gallant seamen bold,  
All you that march to drum,  
Let's go and look for Captain Ward,  
Far on the sea he roams;  
He is the biggest robber  
That ever you did hear,  
There's not been such a robber found  
For above this hundred year.

A ship was sailing from the east  
And going to the west,  
Loaded with silks and satins  
And velvets of the best,  
But meeting there with Captain Ward,  
It proved a bad meeting;  
He robbèd them of all their wealth  
And bid them tell their king.

O then the king provided a ship of noble fame,  
She's call'd the "Royal Rainbow,"  
If you would know her name;  
She was as well provided for  
As any ship could be,  
Full thirteen hundred men on board  
To bear her company.

'Twas eight o' clock in the morning  
When they began to fight,  
And so they did continue there  
Till nine o' clock at night.  
"Fight on, fight on," says Captain Ward,  
"This sport well pleases me,  
For if you fight this month or more,  
Your master I will be."

O then the gallant "Rainbow"  
She fired, she fired in vain,  
Till six and thirty of her men  
All on the deck were slain.  
"Go home, go home," says Captain Ward,  
"And tell your king from me,  
If he reigns king on all the land,

Ward will reign king on sea!”

One of Vaughan Williams’s greatest accomplishments was reclaiming English folk music as a national source of pride in Great Britain. In art song circles, the name Ralph Vaughan Williams and the term “British folk song” have become synonymous. Beginning in 1903, Vaughan Williams began travelling the countryside, collecting, transcribing, and preserving songs. This D major solo voice and piano setting of the traditional ballad “Ward, the Pirate” was published in 1908. The song would later be adapted as an SATB chorale, then again, as a male TTBB setting. There also exists a second solo voice and piano arrangement edited and published by composer Granville Bantock in 1914. Bantock makes only slight alterations, lowering the key a whole step to C major<sup>17</sup>.

The Vaughan Williams setting begins heartily in 4/4 time with the text “Come all you gallant seamen bold, all you that march to drum.” The marching, syllabic vocal line is lively and full of color. The homophonic texture of the *alla marcia* accompaniment doubles the voice in the top notes of its harmonies and produces a hymn-like quality with a buoyant and merry character. The piano part changes slightly in the final two stanzas, adding eighth note embellishments in both hands. This thicker texture suits the poetry in these verses as they describe the fighting action of the ships volleying back and forth with canon fire.

While Vaughan Williams conveys gaiety and rhythmic cheer through his energetic setting of the folk song, he does not alter the folk-like qualities of its

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<sup>17</sup> Julian Onderdonk, “Hymn Tunes from Folk-songs: Vaughan Williams and English Hymnody,” in *Vaughan Williams Essays* ed. Byron Adams and Robin Wells (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

fundamental nature. This is an attractive arrangement that will appeal to those with an interest in folk music, especially folk music relating to the sea.

## Pirate Story (1910)

Range: B4 – E4

Music by Graham Peel (1878 – 1937)

Text by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894) from *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
 Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
 Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
 And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
 Wary of the weather and steering by a star?  
 Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
 To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea—  
 Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
 Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
 The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

Graham Peel's version of "Pirate Story" is an easy, singsong setting that matches the text really well. The accompaniment is staccato and light, invoking perhaps, a scene of children playing patty-cake before they drop anchor and set sail on their pretend pirate voyage.

Peel remains true to the form of the poem, allowing for no embellishment of the text. Verses 1 and 2 are identical in form and melodic make-up, consisting of syllabic text setting comprised strictly of chord tones, and ending on the mediant both times. The material is varied in Verse 3, with accents in the accompaniment for effect ("Hi! but here's a squadron" and "Quick, and we'll escape them"), and an eighth note figure, rising in pitch and volume, depicting the charging herd of cattle. The singer is finally rewarded with the tonic on the last note of the song.

Though speech-like and syllabic, the singer should guard against simply mimicking the staccato, chordal piano accompaniment and singing in a style too

detached. Peel's setting is quite simple and can be easily mastered by the beginning student singer, male or female.

## The Pirate Chief (1911)

Range: A3 – E4

Music by Neil Moret, a.k.a. Charles N. Daniels (1878 – 1943)

Text by Earle C. Jones (fl. 1906 – 1927)

“O sing me a song of the Spanish Main!”  
Said a dying pirate chief.  
“Sing of red rovers bold, with their blood stained gold,  
Or a wreck on a coral reef.  
Nail the black flag high where the seagulls fly,  
Let me die as a wild rover should.  
For my soul soon will ride on the drifting tide,  
Save your pray’rs for the mates who are good- who are good.”

Down, down, down through a crystal wave  
Let me fall to a Pirate’s grave  
For I’ll meet the lads that I used to know,  
In the roving days of long ago  
Oh, there’ll be a warm welcome away down below,  
For the Pirate, the Pirate chief,  
The Pirate, the Pirate chief.”

“Oh, tell me a tale of the Island Seas,”  
Said the Pirate to his crew,  
“Tell of brave boys who swung, from the yard arm hung,  
While the sharks swam the briny blue.  
Spin me gory tales of the piping gales,  
And of ships that the sea spirits haunt,  
For the demons await for their trusty mate!  
And a cutlass is all that I want- all I want.”

Down, down, down through a crystal wave  
Let me fall to a Pirate’s grave  
For I’ll meet the lads that I used to know,  
In the roving days of long ago  
Oh, there’ll be a warm welcome away down below,  
For the Pirate, the Pirate chief,  
The Pirate, the Pirate chief.”

“The Pirate Chief” is sung as a last farewell from a pirate captain to his crew. The song begins *marcato* in 4/4 as the dying chief asks of his men, “Sing me a song of the Spanish Main.” Instead however, it is he who continues singing throughout the song, recalling his former days of glory in vivid detail. Requesting to be buried properly as a

wild rover should, he proudly looks forward to greeting the men who have gone into the grave before him.

The syrupy D major vocal line, with its swaying legato melody and arching phrases, is supported by the piano in the left hand while off-beat eighth notes alternate in the right. The accompaniment construction then changes as the right hand begins to double the voice, a feature that continues until the song's final note. Though the young singer may find this quality helpful to their performance, it may be regarded as cumbersome and restricting to the advanced vocalist.

A marked difference occurs between the verse and chorus sections when the initial 4/4 meter shifts to a rolling refrain in 6/8, now representing the waves that will welcome the sailor to his final resting place. In the spirit of a drinking song "The Pirate Chief" is playful in nature and though the melody leans toward maudlin, it is highly effective nonetheless.

## Pirate Story (1915)

Range: D4 – F5

Music by Phoebe Marie Burley Johnson (fl. 1899 – 1921)

Text by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894) from *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
 Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
 Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
 And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
 Wary of the weather and steering by a star?  
 Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
 To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea—  
 Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
 Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
 The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

Phoebe Johnson's setting of "Pirate Story" is taken from the song cycle, *Six Songs from "A Child's Garden of Verses"* by Robert Louis Stevenson. The song begins and ends with a playful four-measure excerpt of the melody in the piano, marked by a dainty and bouncing arch-like phrase of dotted eighth notes in the treble. One can imagine the children running onto the scene at the beginning and scurrying away in retreat at the finish.

The form is ABA', with a bit of variation in the second A section for interest and bravura. The B section allows for expression and some acting work, with a few ritardandos and breath marks, giving the singer opportunity to point out the possible destinations of the journey (e.g. Providence, Babylon).

The accompaniment is thin and mostly triadic, leaving the singer to manage the melodic material. The score is full of dynamic direction—hairpins abound. Combined

with the step-wise motion of the arching melody, the singer is given ample opportunity to create beautiful, legato phrases.

## Pirate Dreams (1917)

Range: B $\flat$ 4 – E $\flat$ 5

Music by Charles Joseph Huerter (1885 – 1974)

1<sup>st</sup> verse text source unknown

2<sup>nd</sup> verse text by Louise Ayres Garnett

The old rocking chair is baby's boat,  
Adrift on a dreamland sea;  
And baby and I are the crew afloat,  
All cozy and snug are we.  
We rock and hum a crooning song,  
Like a wind in the sails at sea  
But pirate dreams, before very long,  
Capture baby and boat and me.

O baby, the chair someday will be  
A boat for another pair;  
For you with your baby will sail the sea,  
Within the same rocking chair.  
And as we rock and hum and sing,  
So you will go singing too,  
And pirate dreams with sweep and with swing  
Will take baby and boat and you.

“Pirate Dreams” is a precious lullaby sung by a mother to her child as she rocks the young one to sleep. Containing a verse 1 text of unknown origin, Huerter sets a second strophic verse with words by Louise Ayres Garnett.

The 6/8 rhythm that normally illustrates the movement of a ship upon the ocean waves now represents the back and forth motion of a rocking chair. A static accompaniment exists throughout and is built on variations of a figure comprised of foundational quarter notes on beats 1 and 4 in the left hand, followed by two harmonizing sixteenth note patterns in the right. All the while a smooth, lyric vocal melody hangs overhead.

Garnett's second stanza is quite touching. The mother lovingly tells the child that someday they too will rock their own baby in the very same boat. This circle of life

analogy, combined with the textual and musical images of rocking a sweet, innocent child, has the potential of offering a dramatically poignant moment in a performance setting.

## Captain Stratton's Fancy (1919)

Range: D3 – C4

Music by Paul Corder (1879 – 1942)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

Oh, some are fond of Spanish wine and some are fond of French,  
And some'll swallow tay<sup>18</sup> and stuff fit only for a wench,  
But I'm for right Jamaica till I roll beneath the bench,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are for the lily and some are for the rose,  
But I am for the sugar cane that in Jamaica grows,  
For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some that's good and godly ones they hold that it's a sin  
To troll the jolly bowl around and let the dollars spin,  
But I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of dancing, and some are fond of dice,  
And some are all for red lips, and pretty lasses' eyes;  
But a right Jamaica puncheon is a finer prize  
To the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are sad and wretched folk that go in silken suits,  
And there's a mort<sup>19</sup> of wicked rogues that live in good reposes;  
So I'm for drinking honestly, and dying in my boots,  
Like an old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Composed in 1919 by Paul Corder, this is the earliest of six musical settings of John Masefield's poem "Captain Stratton's Fancy" presented in this collection. Best known for his poems of the sea, Masefield became Poet Laureate of the U.K. from 1930 until his death in 1967<sup>20</sup>. Masefield's hardy toast to drinking is set strophically in G major by Corder, with a very limited range for the singer. With a marked tempo indication of

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<sup>18</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> David Llewellyn Dodds, *Arthurian Poets: John Masefield*, Arthurian Poets Series (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 1994), 1.

*moderato* and a mostly *piano* vocal line, the song conveys an awkwardly refined feel as the conjunct motion of the melody skims daintily from the singer's lips.

The texture of the piano part varies from verse to verse, supporting the singer using voice doubling as well as block chords and arpeggiated harmonies. Though the vocal line never wavers from its strophic melody, Corder does provide contrast in the accompaniment, thereby attempting to offer some degree of sonic interest to the listener.

This setting would be an ideal choice for the beginning singer practicing the art of memorizing strophic verse. It would also serve well in performance as part of a larger group of drinking songs, this one demonstrating the softer, mellower side of libating.

## Captain Stratton's Fancy (1920)

Range: D3 – E4

Music by Ivor Gurney (1890 – 1937)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

Oh, some are fond of red wine and some are fond of white  
 And some are all for dancing by the pale moonlight,  
 But rum alone's the tipp<sup>21</sup> and the heart's delight  
 Of the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.  
 Of the old bold mate, of the old bold mate,  
 But rum alone's the tipp<sup>21</sup> and heart's delight,  
 Of the old bold mate of He-ne-ry Morgan.

Oh, some are for the lily and some are for the rose  
 But I am for the sugar cane that in Jamaica grows,  
 For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
 Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.  
 Says the old bold mate, says the old bold mate  
 For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
 Of the old bold mate of Hen-e-ry Morgan.

Oh some are sad and wretched folk that go in silken suits,  
 And there's a mort of wicked rogues that live in good reputes,  
 So I'm for drinking honestly, and dying in my boots,  
 Like an old bold mate of Henry Morgan.  
 Like an old bold mate, like an old bold mate,  
 So I'm for drinking honestly and dying in my boots,  
 Like an old bold mate of Hen-e-ry Morgan.

British composer, Ivor Gurney not only sets just three verses (1, 3, and 7) of the original seven verses of Masefield's poem, but he manipulates each verse further by repeating lines in order to create a refrain in each stanza, a feature which is unique among the six settings of "Captain Stratton's Fancy" in this collection.

Another tribute to rum and other spirits, Gurney indicates a 4/4 tempo *in march time*. With an almost identical G major block chord accompaniment in each of the three stanzas, the piano supports the syllabic melody, doubling it in the treble notes of the right

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<sup>21</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

hand throughout the song. As a result, the tune can be learned rather quickly by even a younger, more inexperienced singer.

## Captain Kidd (1920)

Range: Eb3 – F4

Music and text by Kenneth M. Murchison (1872 – 1938)

You've prob'ly heard of Captain Kidd in the good old days of Yore;  
How he clamped down ev-ry hatch and lid and left his native shore!  
One day he spied a Chinese junk, just sou'-sou'-east off Cuba;  
He heard a plinkety plunk, plunk, plunk, from a band with a Chinese tuba!  
He said to his-self, "How grand our fun'ral's will be with 'em!  
I'll get that Chinese band and teach 'em a brand new rhythm!"

Yo-ho! Around the world we go!  
A catching bulging [*sic*] merchantman and whalers!  
We use the cutlass and the knife and ev'ry day is full of strife!  
Oh! what a screaming life, is led by us sailors!

They heaved a shot so round and true, and the Chinese tub was skewered;  
And the Captain, crew and the good junk too began to list to loo'ard;  
But Captain Kidd raised up his hand and cried in voice stentorian,  
"You can sink the Chink, but save the band, and play me a Chant Gregorian!"  
They played a lullaby, the pirates got an earfull [*sic*];  
And death was in their eye, But Captain Kidd grew tearful!

Yo-ho! Around the world we go!  
We never thought that music could so yellow be!  
With a rum-tee-tiddle and a big bang too, on a Hong-Kong fiddle and a deep bazoo!  
Whang! Ding a ding, dang doo! was a Chinese melodee!

The pirates clamoured, "Let them die!" But George O. Kidd said "No!  
"There is an urgent reason why I cannot let them go!  
This music, why, it is to laugh, nobody will deny it,  
I'll put it on the phonograph and ev'rybody'll buy it!"  
So back they turned their prow, and gave up crime and pillage,  
And Kidd is the leader now of Glee Club in his village.

Yo-ho! Around the world we go!  
A cleaning up the seas at such a high rate!  
But the moral shows just what you've guessed, that music, at its worst or best,  
Will percolate the savage breast of man or beast or pirate!

Kenneth Murchison's 1920 composition entitled, "Captain Kidd" is a perfect example of exoticism gone wrong. The song is fraught with what today is considered to be terribly racist language. Using modal harmonies and pentatonic scalar passages

suggesting the Orient, Murchison describes the capture of a Chinese sailing vessel whose onboard band is heard playing Eastern-sounding music. Derogatory phrases like, “sink the chink” and “we never thought music could be so yellow” may have been considered humorous to some in 1920, but today are completely inappropriate. As such, this song is not recommended for assignment or performance.

## Luck's Buccaneer (1920)

Range: G2 – E4

Music by Lily Strickland (1884 – 1958)

Text by Vivian H. Strickland (dates unknown)

A roving Tar<sup>22</sup> on the sea of life,  
 Luck's Buccaneer, am I.  
 A-carving fate with my gun and knife,  
 Where ever dangers lie.  
 A-sailing far, and a-sailing fast  
 Ready to do or die;  
 I've nailed my colors atop the mast  
 Cleaving the naked sky.  
 A willing slave to my errant whim,  
 Divil<sup>23</sup> a bit care I,  
 So here's to the man who "douses my glim"  
 And hears my last "aye, aye,"

Luck's buccaneer am I,  
 Before the mast I fly!  
 I've treasure trove in a hidden cave,  
 I've gems that will never die;  
 In days of gold, I've wealth untold,  
 In my home beneath the sky;  
 A roving tar on the sea of life,  
 Luck's Buccaneer am I!

I'm Captain Kidd of the sea of life,  
 Luck's Buccaneer am I,  
 I'm never happy unless in strife,  
 Wherever dangers like;  
 When seas are calm I stay in port,  
 But whenever there comes a gale  
 I weigh my anchor and square my yards!  
 Over the foam I sail.  
 If troubles come sighs and groans,  
 Take this advice from me  
 Just send them down to Davy Jones,  
 To the bottom of the sea!

Luck's buccaneer am I,  
 Before the mast I fly!  
 I've treasure trove in a hidden cave,  
 I've gems that will never die;

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<sup>22</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

In days of gold, I've wealth untold,  
In my home beneath the sky;  
A roving tar on the sea of life,  
Luck's Buccaneer am I!

Female composer Lily Strickland wrote nearly 400 works, including popular and sacred music and children's songs. Her early compositions were influenced by folk songs and spirituals from the American South, and later works by Indian, African, and Native American Music<sup>24</sup>.

Strickland's pirate song entitled "Luck's Buccaneer" is permeated by an "open-air quality" as the listener is introduced to a pirate protagonist singing of his freedom on the open seas of life. A mood of optimistic confidence exudes from the actor and continues throughout the story. Written in C major, the song contains a verse-refrain form in 6/8 time. A tuneful melody and simply conceived block chord accompaniment, often doubling the voice, combines to give the song a folk-like characteristic. Through heavy use of nautical terms and colorful pirate lingo, the buccaneer maintains a sense of extroverted declamation, reaffirming his chosen lifestyle. An appropriate song for bass or baritone, "Luck's Buccaneer" provides the singer an opportunity to hone both their diction and storytelling skills while on the performing stage.

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<sup>24</sup> Lee Davis Perry, *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable South Carolina Women* (Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2009), 99.

## An Old Song Re-sung (1920)

Range: Eb3 – F4

Music by Charles T. Griffes (1884 – 1920)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

I saw a ship a-sailing, a-sailing, a-sailing,  
 With emeralds and rubies and sapphires in her hold;  
 And a bosun in a blue coat bawling at the railing,  
 Piping a silver call that had a chain of gold;  
 The summer wind was failing and the tall ship rolled.

I saw a ship a-steering, a-steering, a-steering,  
 With roses in red thread worked upon her sails;  
 With sacks of purple amethysts, the spoils of buccaneering,  
 Skins of musky yellow wine, and silks in bales,  
 Her merry men were cheering, hauling on the brails.

I saw a ship a-sinking, a-sinking, a-sinking,  
 With glittering sea-water splashing on her decks,  
 With seamen in her spirit-room singing songs and drinking,  
 Pulling claret bottles down, and knocking off the necks,  
 The broken glass was chinking as she sank among the wrecks.

“An Old Song Re-sung”, by Charles Griffes is a lively piece very much in the spirit of a sea-shanty. The narrator recalls his encounter with a ship filled with merry pirates and pilfered treasure. Organized in three verses, the song opens in a cheerful and energetic fashion as the singer proclaims, “I saw a ship a-sailing with emeralds and rubies and sapphires in her hold.” This colorful narrative is deceptive and short-lived however, and a tragic tale begins to unfold.

The final verse vividly describes the sinking of the ship and deaths of the drunken sailors. Depicted musically with an agitated accompaniment, there is a back and forth movement by half-step in the left-hand of the piano representing the rocking motion or “glib-glub, glib-glub” of the boat as it sinks, thereby sealing the sailors’ doom.

The song's tuneful quality and narrow range make it an appropriate choice for the young singer. At the same time, dramatic emphasis on contrasting dynamics and long, clean phrasing allows the more advanced singer an opportunity to showcase the voice.

## Pirate Song (1920)

Range: B $\flat$ 3 – F4

Music by George Whitefield Chadwick (1854 – 1931)

Text taken from “A Rover Shanty” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859 – 1930)

A trader sail'd from Stepney town,  
Wake her up! Shake her up! Try her with the mainsail!  
A trader sailed from Stepney town  
With a bag full of gold and a velvet gown.  
Ho, ho, ho, the bully, bully rover Jack,  
Waiting with his yard aback  
Out upon the Lowland sea.

Where is the trader of Stepney town?  
Wake her up! Shake her up! Ev'ry stick a-bending!  
Where is the trader of Stepney town?  
His gold's on the capstain<sup>25</sup>, his blood's on his gown,  
All, all for the bully, bully Rover Jack,  
Reaching on the weather tack,  
Out upon the Lowland sea!

So it's up and away to Stornoway Bay,  
Pack it on! Crack it on! Try her with the stun'sails<sup>26</sup>!  
It's off on a bowline to Stornoway Bay,  
Where the liquor is good and the lassies are gay,  
Waiting for their bully, bully Rover Jack,  
Watching for him sailing back,  
Right across the Lowland sea,  
Right across the Lowland sea.

G.W. Chadwick's “Pirate Song” is based on a shanty sung by characters in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short story, “Captain Sharkey”, a featured tale in his 1900 book, *The Green Flag and Other Short Stories*.

The busy accompaniment is highly chromatic and contains many features that set up and respond to the drama of the text. A rich texture of march-like rhythmic patterns illustrates the relentless attack of pirates upon an English trading vessel. Tremolos and scalar passages in contrary motion depict the sails of the ships as they race into battle. A

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<sup>25</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

clever use of call and response is employed as the singer barks out his firing orders, “Wake her up, shake her up!” The piano responds in concurrence, striking its own declamatory accents.

Tempo varies throughout the song and is marked by clear instructions in the score. There are also many fermatas in the voice part, which help set up the tempo contrasts as well as the often sung phrase “bully bully Rover Jack” which is marked a tempo animato.

Descending melodic lines highlight the sinister nature of the poem while the accompaniment carries the harmonic load, modulating from the foundational key of C minor to an E $\flat$  minor middle section and then back again. “Pirate Story” for baritone voice is suitable for performance and audition purposes alike. However, it does take an accomplished accompanist to properly navigate the complex musical setting.

## Pirate Song (1920)

Range: D3 – E $\flat$ 4

Music and text by Horace Johnson (1893 – 1964)

I wish I were a pirate and own'd a pirate boat.  
I'd have a crew so wicked, they'd be the worst afloat.  
We'd never stop at nothing, and kill all folks we met  
And fight with other vessels, and beat them too, you bet!

We'd Capture all the women, and make 'em awful scar'd.  
Of course, I'd leave out mother, unless she was too bad.  
Now when I'd get them lined up, you know who I'd kill first?  
I'd hang that fat old lady who says that boys are cursed!

This witty song from American composer Horace Johnson is comprised of a short and curt diatribe spoken from the lips of a male adolescent. The young boy envisions himself as a treacherous pirate. No longer under the authority of adults, he is now the captain of his own crew.

The whimsical, highly chromatic melody contains many awkward leaps and skips and is set atop a *marcatissimo* accompaniment of equal quirkiness. Firm accents in the piano are meant to emphasize the serious tone of the threatening youth. The accompaniment is marked staccato, but the voice is not. The singer must refrain from mirroring what he hears in the accompaniment. Instead, he should sing more legato throughout, still minding the terse accents marked in the score.

At first glance, the poetry seems weighty and grave. Yet in the end, the song is simply a bit of fun. The text is meant to be taken lightly and Johnson's musical setting supports this idea. After all, these words are but the idle threats of a frustrated child.

## Captain Stratton's Fancy (1922)

Range: C3 – F4

Music by Peter Warlock (1894 – 1930)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

Oh, some are fond of red wine and some are fond of white,  
And some are all for dancing by the pale moonlight,  
But rum alone's the tippie and the heart's delight  
Of the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of Spanish wine and some are fond of French,  
And some'll swallow tay and stuff fit only for a wench,  
But I'm for right Jamaica till I roll beneath the bench,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are for the lily and some are for the rose,  
But I am for the sugar cane that in Jamaica grows,  
For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of fiddles and a song well sung  
And some are all for music for to lilt upon the tongue,  
But mouths were made for tankards and for sucking at the bung,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some that's good and godly ones they hold that it's a sin  
To troll the jolly bowl around and let the dollars spin,  
But I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Peter Warlock was known for his boisterous drinking songs (he wrote plenty of beautiful “sober” songs as well). In fact, Warlock's total art song output totals 119<sup>27</sup>. Oddly enough, “Captain Stratton's Fancy” is the only one of Warlock's songs recorded (by bass, Peter Dawson) during his own lifetime. His is a jolly, tuneful setting in F major, describing the singer's preference for rum over other spirits. Of the seven total verses in Masefield's original poem, Warlock sets five of them (1, 2, 3, 4, and 6). Easily mastered by any young singer, attention should be paid to dynamic contrast from verse to verse.

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<sup>27</sup> Fred Tomlinson, *A Peter Warlock Handbook: Volume 1* (London: Triad Press, 1974), 45.

## The Old Bold Mate\* (1922)

Range: A3 – D4

Music by Esmond Bristol (c.1878 – ?)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

Oh, some are fond of red wine and some are fond of white,  
And some are all for dancing by the pale moonlight,  
But rum alone's the tippie and the heart's delight  
Of the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of Spanish wine and some are fond of French,  
And some'll swallow tay and stuff fit only for a wench,  
But I'm for right Jamaica till I roll beneath the bench,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are for the lily and some are for the rose,  
But I am for the sugar cane that in Jamaica grows,  
For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of fiddles and a song well sung  
And some are all for music for to lilt upon the tongue,  
But mouths were made for tankards and for sucking at the bung,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some that's good and godly ones they hold that it's a sin  
To troll the jolly bowl around and let the dollars spin,  
But I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are sad and wretched folk that go in silken suits,  
And there's a mort of wicked rogues that live in good reutes;  
So I'm for drinking honestly, and dying in my boots,  
Like an old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

\*(a.k.a. "Captain Stratton's Fancy")

Poet John Masefield's original 1903 seven-verse poem "Captain Stratton's Fancy" was set yet again in 1922 by little known composer, Esmond Bristol; this time omitting only verse 5.

*In a free and vigorous style* indicates the score, as the marching piano introduction sets the stage for rousing song. The voice enters singing in ascending and descending stepwise passages. This mostly conjunct melody continues, and as the stanzas end and begin again, another strophic setting of “Captain Stratton’s Fancy” unfurls.

With an easily realized accompaniment and a vocal part suitable for even the young singer, this arrangement produces an overall sense of revelry. As one reviewer said at the time of the song’s publication, “‘The old, bold Mate’, by Esmond Bristol, to words of John Masefield (Novello), will please audiences who are out to hear a good rollicking song. It would put any advocate of ‘prohibition’ in the dumps for a week.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* (London), no. 63 (January to December 1922) : 856.

## Theodore or The Pirate King (1922)      Range: C#3 – F#4

Music by Gerald Hugh Tyrwhitt-Wilson (a.k.a. Lord Berners) (1883 – 1950)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

They sacked the ships of London town,  
 They burned the ships of Rye and Cadiz,  
 They pulled full many a city down;  
 A bloody trade a pirate's trade is.  
 But Theodore, though dripping gore,  
 Was always courteous to the ladies.

This John Masefield poem was set to music in 1922 by the eccentric British composer, novelist, and painter, Lord Berners. Some considered the man strange, while others thought him a genius. Berners, who spent time on his vast estate dying pigeons, once also kept a giraffe as a pet so he could have tea with it in his garden<sup>29</sup>. Despite such eccentricities, Berners does a fine job here, enhancing the satire and wit of Masefield's verse.

Berners sets the six-lined quip in a through-composed form. Though the score contains only 21 measures, it changes meter four times. The vocal line begins in a very decisive manner. Long, arching phrases containing odd intervallic skips are sung *forte*, as the singer describes the pirates invading the town. The accompaniment supports the voice via melodic doubling in the treble notes, yet still manages to create a heavily chromatic foundation below.

In the song's final 8 measures, there is a delightful moment of disparity between the music and the poetry, which makes the song even more fascinating. As the score is marked *sentimentale* and *piano*, the accompaniment provides an angelic backdrop of

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<sup>29</sup> Joseph Epstein, *In a Cardboard Belt!: Essays Personal, Literary, and Savage* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007), 199.

staccato B major arpeggios as the singer soothingly states, “But Theodore, though dripping gore...”

Coming from a man who fitted his Rolls-Royce with a harpsichord, then played as he drove around the countryside, it is no wonder this piece draws the curious stare<sup>30</sup>. A great choice as a mid-set selection, “Theodore or the Pirate King” is sure to entertain.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

## Captain Stratton's Fancy (1923)

Range: B $\flat$ 3 – F4

Music by Deems Taylor (1885 – 1966)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

Oh, some are fond of red wine and some are fond of white,  
And some are all for dancing by the pale moonlight,  
But rum alone's the tippie and the heart's delight  
Of the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of Spanish wine and some are fond of French,  
And some'll swallow tay and stuff fit only for a wench,  
But I'm for right Jamaica till I roll beneath the bench,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are for the lily and some are for the rose,  
But I am for the sugar cane that in Jamaica grows,  
For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of dancing, and some are fond of dice,  
And some are all for red lips, and pretty lasses' eyes,  
But a right Jamaican puncheon is a finger prize  
To the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some that's good and godly ones they hold that it's a sin  
To troll the jolly bowl around and let the dollars spin,  
But I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are sad and wretched folk that go in silken suits,  
And there's a mort of wicked rogues that live in good reposes;  
So I'm for drinking honestly, and dying in my boots,  
Like an old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

John Masefield's poem "Captain Stratton's Fancy" was set for the fifth time in four years with the publication of composer Deems Taylor's setting in 1923. Taylor, also an author, radio commentator, and music critic, was known for his often witty and entertaining style, to which this song can further attest<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> James A. Pegolotti, *Deems Taylor: A Biography* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003).

This setting contains more musical variation than the previous four described thus far. Rather than setting the song in a simple strophic style, Taylor created an overall form of AABABA'. The A sections are in the tonic key of D minor, while the B sections are in the relative F major.

The accompaniment is more complex than the others seen thus far. A repeated blocked chord texture with emphasis on the beats 1 and 3 of the 4/4 measures, grounds the song with a bold and virile manner. At the same time, the lilting vocal melody contains many dotted rhythms mirrored in the right hand treble notes of the piano part. The resulting gallop permeates the landscape of the song and continues to be present though the key-changing B sections as well.

The signature trait of the song is found in the stanza ending statements of “The Old Mate of Henry Morgan.” Here the vocal line departs from its usual vigorously moving dotted eighth and sixteenth melody, and stretches out with half-note figures on “Old” and “Bold” and “Mate.” As the singer sustains these pitches, the piano draws attention to itself by playing a descending quarter note passage of chromatic half-steps. One can imagine the singer lifting his glass to toast Captain Morgan, and then quickly imbibing his libation.

While the piano part is marked with a lot of lifts, rests, and overall rhythmic separation in its part, the singer’s vocal line is not. The vocalist must guard against mimicking this choppiness, and instead maintain a contrasting legato line resulting in a faithful representation of the more casual, laidback manner of a mate who has been downing rum at the local tavern. The detached accompaniment can properly depict the man’s inebriated state as he hiccups his way through the narrative.

## The Penitent Pirate (1925)

Range: A3 – D4

Music by Harold Temple Abady (1903 – 1970)

Text by L.G. Eady (fl. 1923 – 1930)

We'd a long, low, rakish schooner in those merry days of old,  
And a crew of handy cut-throats who were filled with lust for gold;  
We'd cutlasses and pistols, and we sailed the silver seas,  
While the wicked Jolly Roger floated o'er us in the breeze.

We would chase the fat old merchantman in dim and fading light,  
And we'd steal up close beside her in the darkness of the night;  
We would board her we'd loot her and we'd watch her till she sank;  
Then we'd blindfold all the prisoners, and we'd make them walk the plank.

Then we'd sharpen up our cutlasses and stow the spoil away,  
And we wouldn't do another stroke of work that blessed day;  
But we'd dance the sailor's hornpipe, and we'd sing a pirate song,  
And we'd have a tot of rum apiece before we moved along.

But now that I'm repentant I most naturally deplore  
The wicked awful life I led those merry days of yore.  
I wouldn't even murder a defenceless [*sic*] little snail,  
And the mention of penknife is enough to make me quail.

I go to church on Sunday and put tuppence in the box;  
I never use bad language, I've a pretty taste in socks;  
And when I want a trip to sea I book a seat for one,  
And go to Margate for the day aboard the 'Rising Sun'.

It's unfortunate of course to see the error of one's ways,  
And I shudder, as I ought to, at those merry early days;  
But I've got a sneaking feeling that my life was not so dull,  
When we flew the Jolly Roger with its cross bones and its skull.

“The Penitent Pirate” is a narrative concerning a former pirate who has left his old ways and become a model citizen. Briskly set in D major with the components of a patter song, the buccaneer recalls his glory days in vivid detail. To emphasize the text, the musical accompaniment has a transparent texture and is fairly undemanding. Steady block chord eighth notes support the voice harmonically as it swiftly moves ever onward, pausing only for vocal fermatas at the ends of each verse. When this occurs, the piano

briefly doubles an undulating vocal melody as focus is drawn to the singer. These verse ending statements hover within a B minor tonality and appropriately illustrate the text: (the swaying of the breeze, the movement of a boat, someone walking the plank). There is then a brief transition back to D major as the next verse begins. The first three stanzas of the song follow this pattern.

The text of verses four and five comprise a middle section or bridge centering on the dominant A major. Marked *slowly and sentimentally*, the narrative shifts to the present time, and the pirate sings *piano*, describing his kind, repentant nature. The accompaniment changes too, creating a foundational texture of half-note pedal tones. Here, the pianist should play much more legato in order to match the softer and more fluid tones of the actor.

The final verse six contains an interesting and clever closing statement. Musically, it begins like the first three verses, but ends quite differently. The penitent pirate is believed to be summing up his speech as he quips, “It’s fortunate of course to see the error in one’s ways.” However, upon stating his final line, “When we flew the Jolly Roger with its crossbones and its skull,” he does not end on either the anticipated B minor figure or in the tonic D major. Instead, he sings an F#, and the piece ends in the submediant B major. This final statement has an unresolved, unsettled aural impact on the listener, giving the impression that perhaps the man’s pirating days are not over after all.

## Pirate Song (1925)

Range: D3 – F#4

Music by Clarence Olmstead (1892 – 1969)

Text by Stuart Blythe (dates unknown)

Cutlass gleaming, trough of the sea,  
Salt spray streaming, wind blowing free,  
Bend to the oars lads, yon's our prize  
She's full o'gold, lads, blast her eyes!  
So pull ye scurvy ridden scum!  
There's gold ahead!  
Better to have it now than when ye are dead!

Blackjack flying, powder and ball,  
Seagulls crying, sun over all  
Pull to the ship, lads, yon's our game.  
She's full o'wealth, lads, blast her name.  
She's full o'wealth, lads, blast her name.  
So pull ye bloody sons of hell!  
There's gold ahead!  
Better to have it now than when ye are dead!

Spume on the wave, white wine and red,  
Ace, king, and knave, why die in bed?  
Pull with a will, lads, yon's our prey;  
She's full o'spoil, lads, blast the jay!  
So pull ye reekin spawn o' crime  
There's gold ahead!  
Better to have it now than when ye are dead!

Up and board her, climb o'er the side,  
Give no quarter, hell's jaws are wide!  
Pull with your all, lads, yon's our goal;  
She's full o' boot, lads, blast her soul!  
She's full o' boot, lads, blast her soul!  
So pull ye gallows cheating swine!  
There's gold, gold, gold, ahead!  
Better to have it now than when ye are dead!

Composer Clarence Olmstead and lyricist Stuart Blythe have united to create a beautiful, majestic depiction of a pirate boat as if seen from afar, sailing across the open water in a quest for treasure. Marked *larghetto* (*with the swing of the oarsmen*), the song is written with extremely broad vocal phrasing. There are sometimes two to three-

measure phrases, and at other times, six. The singer must plan their breaths accordingly, realizing that mid-phrase catch breaths may be required. Dynamics range from *piano* to *fortissimo* and dramatic power from the voice is required at various times throughout the song. As such, “Pirate Song” is recommended for the more mature voice or highly trained singer, capable of pacing themselves.

Upon hearing the opening statement of the accompaniment, one notices the distinct pattern of alternating blocked major seventh chords evocative of Erik Satie’s famously atmospheric *Gymnopédies*. Olmstead uses this harmonic blueprint as the foundation for the song.

The singer enters describing the power of the blowing wind and salt-spraying sea. He yells, “Bend to your oars, lads, yon’s our prize. She’s full o’ gold, lads blast her eyes!” The voice is that of the captain, giving orders to his men to row with all their might. He continues, “So pull ye scurvy ridden scum! There’s gold ahead! Better to have it now than when ye are dead!” The piano and vocal lines exude beauty and grace, not aligned to the gritty poetry. But there is a reason for this odd juxtaposition. It has become understood that over the centuries, the harsh realities of the pirate’s lifestyle have been replaced with a more romanticized view. Here too, in “Pirate Song”, Olmstead and Blythe have created their own romanticization. The music’s slow majestic tempo and tonal beauty represents the image of the boat, glistening in the sun as it smoothly glides across the open water. From a distance, the boat looks as if it moves under its own accord. However upon closer inspection, a different scene plays out. Within the ship’s inner workings, the commanding captain barks his commands to the oarsmen who sweat and toil as they row with vigorous force.

The singer must conserve their energy and vocal power for the end of the song. In the final eight measures, there are two different appearances of a high F#4 under a fermata. The first appears on the captain's words, "There's gold, gold, gold, ahead!" The vocalist should caution against taking too much time here, as the second, more powerful and longer held F#4 is required on the final words, "When ye are dead."

## Were I The Pirate of the Sea (1926)

Range: C3 – F4

Music and text by Gardner Eyre (a.k.a. Agnes de Jahn) (fl. 1905 – 1938)

Were I a pirate of the sea,  
 The wondership I'd commandeer;  
 And on the rigging I would hang  
 The skulls of all I'd killed that year.  
 And if the night were black and fierce,  
 With magic red the skulls I'd light,  
 Then join the wind with shrieks that pierce  
 The souls of them that curse the night.  
 A thunderbolt! dawn breaks at last,  
 Then moan a dirge, oh buccaneer!  
 The lightning's target was the mast,  
 A burning ship, a sinking bier!

Set in through-composed form, the brief, “Were I a Pirate of the Sea” is a refreshing contrast to the many strophic songs contained in this collection. The voice begins with a tuneful, folk-like melody in F minor set atop a triadic accompaniment of diatonic harmonies. A second section begins at, “And if the night were black and fierce,” where the piano provides a faster rhythmic pace via rapid chromatic sixteenth note arpeggios. Two repeated melodic phrases grow and subside dynamically here as the singer describes the glowing skulls of those he has killed, flailing in the wind. The voice halts abruptly as a rapid descending piano flourish, depicting the lightning and thunder of a storm, lands with a thud on a low G $\flat$ .

The final section begins with hushed, rising chromatic passages in the voice and piano, representing the breaking of the dawn. It now becomes clear to the narrator that his ship was hit and set afire by lightning during the night. Realizing his fate, he cries out a powerful, “O Buccaneer!” The ship burns and sinks.

Albeit brief, “Were I a Pirate of the Sea” contains interesting contrasts in rhythm, tempo, and harmony. Opening in a tuneful way, the listener is presented a false veneer

that quickly changes into something much more theatrical. Composer Agnes Gardner Eyre presents not only a great example of storytelling, but also a glimpse into the harsh realities of life at sea.

## The Pirate (1927)

Range: C#3 – A5

Music by Florence Turner-Maley (1871 – 1962)

Text by Margaret Gordon (1885 – 1991)

I dreamed I was a pirate, a pirate bad and bold!  
 I dreamed I sailed the seven seas in search of yellow gold.  
 Each ship in sight was sunk in the night, her crew walked the plank for me,  
 For I thought, yes I did, I was Captain Kidd, Captain Kidd as bold as could be.  
 I sailed by the light of a moon so bright, to an isle in the Carrib Sea,  
 To an isle in the Carrib Sea.

Yo-ho, yo-hum, my yellow gold and a bottle of rum,  
 I took with me to that isle in the sea, to that hidden isle of the Carribee,  
 Of the Carrib, Carrib, Carrib Sea.

I dreamed I was a pirate, a pirate gay and free!  
 I dreamed that ev'ry lady fair was very fond of me;  
 With jewels rare I decked their hair, I loved them all, you see;  
 For I thought, yes I did, I was Captain Kidd, Captain Kidd as bold as could be.  
 I sang each night in the soft moonlight to my love of the Carrib Sea,  
 To a maid who belonged to me.

Yo-ho, yo-hum, to my lady fair, and the bottle of rum  
 I took with me to that isle in the sea, to that lovely isle of the Carribee,  
 Of the Carrib, Carrib, Carrib Sea.

But when I awoke from dreaming, the morn was bleak and cold;  
 The maidens fair had vanished quite, I had no yellow gold.  
 The running fight, the jewels bright, the life from care so free,  
 Old Captain Kidd, the gold he hid, was only a memory.  
 Each starry night I yearn for a sight of that isle of the Carrib Sea,  
 Dreamy isle of the Carribee.

Yo-ho, yo-hum, I miss the maids, I miss the rum,  
 I long to be on that isle of the sea, on that isle o'dreams in the Carribee,  
 In the Carrib, Carrib Sea.

Modified-strophic in formal structure with repeating A and B sections, “The Pirate” by Florence Turner-Maley was published for high voice in 1927. Composer and author of over 75 published works (songs, books for children, mixed choruses, sacred and popular music, and piano pieces), Turner-Maley was also a singer and voice teacher in

New York City throughout much of her life<sup>32</sup>. Interestingly, the lyrics of this song were penned by Margaret Gordon, a Tennessee poet who composed verse on various themes throughout her life. Gordon's first anthology of poetry was published in 1990, just one year before her death at age 104<sup>33</sup>.

Set in D major and containing a high A5, a true tenor would find this tuneful song highly accessible and quick to learn. Written in 2/4 time, the piano begins the introduction by stating the song's main melodic material. As the voice enters, the piano continues either doubling the vocal melody or supporting it through mostly vertical diatonic arpeggios and blocked chords.

In general, the melodic shape of the vocal phrasing is either an arch or a descending line. There are many tempo indications in the score including *rallentando*, *ritardando*, *accelerando*, and fermata signs. Consequently, it is imperative that the accompanist and singer are in agreement with one another as to the pacing of the song. "The Pirate" requires special attention also be paid to the diction. The wordy, quick moving lyrics can be tongue twisting at times, so the singer should do his best keep the words at the front of the mouth. This should be accomplished however, without compromising tonal beauty or healthy vocal production.

Verse three is modified slightly as the main melody now appears in D minor. This tonal area lasts only briefly as the speaker awakens from a dream to find he is alone in the cold, bleak morning air, without any gold. He quickly brushes aside such thoughts, returning to the swinging major tonality as before. In the final refrain there is a *molto*

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<sup>32</sup> Mary Herron DuPree, *Musical Americans: A Biographical Dictionary, 1918-1926* (Berkeley CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1997), 228.

<sup>33</sup> Margaret Gordon Williams, *Buckeyes: A Collection of Verse* (Memphis TN: Volunteer Publications, 1990).

*rallentando* as he sings, “I miss the maids, I miss the rum.” Then it is *a tempo ed accelerando*, rushing forward to the grand finale, complete with a vocal high A5 on the penultimate word, “Car-rib.” The singer can take some freedom here for the piano is marked *colla voce*. As the voice holds the final tonic note on the word “Sea,” the piano restates the main melody as in the introduction and finishes with a proud D major chord in the treble.

## A Pirate Bold (1927)

Range: A3 – F#4

Music by Emil Fisher (fl. 1904 – 1927)

Text by C.F.D.

Behold in me, a wolf of the sea,  
 Who roams the Spanish Main;  
 For jewels or gold, or a maiden bold,  
 I spill red blood to gain.  
 My captives are from near and far,  
 A silly sickning [*sic*] lot,  
 Their pleading eyes or wailing cries,  
 To me are less than rot.

Ha-ha, Ha-ha, Ha-ha!  
 Ha-ha, Ha-ha, Ha-ha!

I'm a pirate bold who's very cruel and cold  
 Defy me if you dare;  
 I've sailed the seas, in every known breeze,  
 My victims I never spare;  
 I'm known to fame for every shame,  
 But what I care I if gold's my aim!  
 I'm a pirate bold who's very cruel and cold,  
 Defy me if you dare.

Binary in form, “A Pirate Bold” contains two musically varying A and B sections.

The poetry here is colorful, but typical of other pirate language found in this collection.

However, a new description appears as the pirate is referred to as a “wolf of the sea.” At the end of the first stanza, the singer is charged with acting out in exclamatory laughter lasting an uncomfortably long four measures. The piano laughs along, with a lengthy descending passage of disjunct triplet figures.

There is a surprising and abrupt key change at the beginning of the B section as the singer proudly proclaims, “I'm a pirate bold who's very cruel and cold.” Now in D major, the music seems out of character with the villainous nature of the rover. Perhaps this tonality is intended to suggest the pirate's pride and carefree attitude.

“A Pirate Bold” does not provide lasting impact but would be an appropriate choice for the beginning baritone. The song’s easily grasped melody, optional high notes, and overall binary form provide the young singer opportunities to practice acting and storytelling skills, and to experience varying degrees of vocal interpretation.

## Captain Harry Morgan (1928)

Range: D3 – E4

Music by Granville Bantock (1868 – 1946)

Text by John Marley (dates unknown)

O, Captain Harry Morgan has spread his sails again,  
His sea-wolves dream of treasure and gold moidores<sup>34</sup> of Spain;  
Of ready blade and pistol and, when the struggle's done,  
The sparkling wine and women that victory has won.

O, Captain Harry Morgan, a Welshman bold is he,  
And King of all the pirates that sail the Caribbee;  
A dashing son of Fortune that fears no mortal foe,  
From Yucatan to Rico his guns deal death and woe.

O, Captain Harry Morgan has led his wolves thro' hell,  
Across the narrow Isthmus the Dons have guarded well;  
Fair Panama is burning 'mid scenes of blood and shame,  
But Captain Harry Morgan has won immortal fame.

O, Captain Harry Morgan, a Welshman bold is he,  
And king of all the pirates that sail the Caribbee,  
A dashing son of Fortune that fears no mortal foe,  
From Yucatan to Rico his guns deal death and woe.

O, Captain Harry Morgan, rich spoils are his to share,  
And Captain Harry Morgan has found a gem most rare,  
A dark-eyed Señorita that knelt her life to crave,  
Sails back with Harry Morgan, across the tropic wave.

O, Captain Harry Morgan a Welshman bold is he,  
And king of all the pirates that sail the Caribbee;  
His buccaneers may harry and plunder as of yore,  
But Captain Harry Morgan will scour the seas no more.

Gravnille Bantock's rollicking "Captain Harry Morgan" celebrates the life and legend of Welsh privateer/pirate Henry Morgan. Descriptive lyrics by John Marley label Morgan "King of all the pirates that sail the Caribbee." Morgan's burning of Panama and

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<sup>34</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

capturing of wine, woman, and gold earned him this reputation and it is to these exploits that Marley refers<sup>35</sup>.

This modified-strophic song in verse-refrain form is presented in C minor with a 12/8 compound meter. The accompaniment is colorful and broad and the vocal line declamatory and speech-like. The recurring refrain sections in C minor are marked *tempo giusto*, *alla marcia*, and *pesante* and include straightforward diatonic harmonic language, whereas the verses are more complex in structure and contain unexpected accidentals in the voice (on phrases such as “has led his wolves thro’ hell” and “fair Panama is burning ’mid scenes of blood and shame”) and chromatic arpeggios in the piano. Accordingly, the singer should take extra care to learn and master their pitches correctly.

The third verse stands out in the song in that it begins with new melodic material. As the singer describes the “dark-eyed Señorita,” the score is marked *allegretto spagnolo* and changes to 3/4 time. The piano’s dance-like staccato rhythms conjure up images of clicking castanets. And as Morgan takes his Spanish bride back “across the tropic wave,” the piano and voice illustrate the action with a *crescendo* rolling motion that also serves as a harmonic transition back to the tonic refrain. As the song closes, the singer makes a small but dramatic melodic adjustment, climaxing to a dramatic E♭ on the text, “Morgan will scour the seas no more.” This alteration concludes the song in C major as if to say, “Ah, the good life.” After all, Morgan was eventually pardoned, knighted, and awarded the post of Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876-1953* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 512.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

## The Phantom Pirate (Captain Goldsack) (1929)

Music by Claude Warford (1877 – 1950)

Range: A3 – E4

Text by William Sharp (1855 – 1905)

Down in the yellow bay where the scows<sup>37</sup> are sleeping,  
 Where among the dead men the sharks flit to and fro.  
 There Captain Goldsack goes, creeping, creeping, creeping,  
 Looking for his treasure, his treasure down below.  
 Yo-ho! Yo-ho! Yo-ho!  
 Creeping, creeping, creeping, creeping down below. Yo-ho!

Down among the tangleweed where the dead are leaking  
 With the ebb and flow of water through their ribs and hollow bones,  
 Isaac Goldsack stoops low, seeking, seeking, seeking, seeking.  
 What's he seeking there amidst a lot o' dead men's bones?  
 Ye ho, heave a ye ho!  
 Seeking, seeking, seeking down below.

Twice a hundred year and more are gone across the bay,  
 Down across the yellow bay where the dead are sleeping,  
 But Captain Goldsack gropes and gropes from year long day to day,  
 Captain Goldsack gropes below, creeping, creeping,  
 Yo-ho! Yo-ho! Yo-ho!  
 Creeping, creeping, creeping down below. Yo-ho!

Written by American composer Claude Warford, “The Phantom Pirate” is an eerie song describing the ghost of one Captain Isaac Goldsack who lies creeping below the water, among a shipwrecked vessel. As the narrator looks on, he wonders if the phantom will find what he is searching for.

Illustrating the many details of Isaac’s treasure hunt, the piano part serves the text nicely. Downward accompaniment patterns and long descending vocal passages appear throughout, depicting both the sunken vessel and drowned sailor-spirit. The singer is often aided by the piano’s doubling in the treble notes of the right hand. At other times, the accompaniment is busy providing musical depictions of the ebb and flow of water

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<sup>37</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

through the ribs of sunken skeletons, or the creeping of the phantom among the twisted tangleweed on the ocean floor.

Set in A minor, the song only briefly flits into the parallel A major as the passage of time is represented for four measures on the words, “Twice a hundred years or more as gone across the bay.” It’s then quickly back to the A minor as Captain Goldsack resumes his “creeping.” This word is repeated several times: soft at first in the voice, with an echo from the piano. It builds on a higher pitch. The piano does likewise. The pirate offers, “Yo-ho, Yo-ho, Yo-ho” as if to say, “What’s this?!?” Then marked *suddenly fast*, the piano and voice sing briskly in unison by way of descending chromatic passage, “creeping down below.” They land together on a low A. But, just as the listener thinks the song has ended, the singer exclaims “Yo-ho!” on a high E4. Captain Isaac Goldsack has found his treasure!

## The Pirate (1929)

Range: G2 – E♭4

Music and text by Frederick A. Williams (1875 – 1939)

Over the sea in my good ship Bess,  
A merry pirate am I, Yo Ho!  
To an island of treasure away to the west;  
There's a chest of gold in a place that's best,  
Yo Ho! Yo Ho! A merry pirate am I.

With a crew of bold and husky men,  
Who fear no foe of more than ten;  
I am captain Jack to all of them,  
Who sail on the good ship Bess,  
Yo ho! Yo Ho! A merry pirate am I.

When winds are fresh and the sky is blue,  
When the spray seems just like morning dew,  
I look for the sails of a merchant ship,  
And gird my cutlass upon my hip;  
Yo Ho! Yo Ho! A merry pirate am I.

With a prize in the offing I'm right at my best,  
And the life of a pirate may not a jest,  
But for treasure and gold, I am right with the rest;  
To an island of treasure away to the west;  
Yo Ho! Yo Ho! A merry pirate am I.

“The Pirate” by Frederick A. Williams has the stereotypical characteristics of many a merry pirate piece. Set to a brisk 6/8 meter *in a bold and jolly style*, the song contains a folk-like opening melodic statement reminiscent of the famous traditional Italian folk dance “Tarantella Napoletana”<sup>38</sup>. In this case however, the melody is altered slightly to match the tonality of B♭ major.

As the pirate soloist praises his shipmates for their fearless nature, he describes his quest for chests of gold. His positive outlook and blithe attitude are supported musically by ascending shouts of “Yo-ho!,” which are then echoed similarly in the piano.

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<sup>38</sup> Jordan Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius: A Cultural History of Naples* (New York: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd., 2005), 187-188.

A middle section is labeled *meno mosso*, as soft, bass tremolos in the piano support the text, which speaks of the fresh winds, blue sky, and salty spray. On the final page the singer maintains, “The life of a pirate may not be jest, but for treasure and gold, I am right for the rest.” He admits that his job is not an easy one, but if there is treasure involved, he’ll work hard to get it.

Easily grasped by the young singer, the singsong melody is doubled and sometimes tripled in the accompaniment. At times however, the texture of the piano part becomes dense, requiring additional sensitivity from the accompanist. All in all “The Pirate” is a fine choice for a beginning singer with a low G2.

## The Jolly Roger (1932)

Range: C3 – F4

Music by R. Ritchie Robertson (1870 – 1939)

Text by Dorothy Foster Brown (unknown)

Ship ahoy! Yo-ho!

Sing a song of pirates, sailing o'er the main,

On the trail of treasure-ships from Salvador to Spain,

\*[Following the glint of gold to Hell and back again,]

For they're following the Jolly Roger.

Rough, tough sailormen, naked to the waist,

Black and tan and yellow men, lean and evil faced,

Out-at-elbows gentlemen, dirty and disgraced,

For they're following the Jolly Roger.

Sing a song of pirates, sailing o'er the main,

On the trail of treasure-ships from Salvador to Spain,

\*Following the glint of gold to Hell and back again,

For they're following the Jolly Roger.

Swaggering adventurers, with histories to hide,

Jailbirds and water-rats, cruel, shifty-eyed;

Outlaws of the seven seas fighting side by side,

For they're following the Jolly Roger.

Sing a song of pirates, sailing up and down;

Some of them will die by steel, some of them will drown,

Some will grace a gallows-tree in a harbor town,

For they're following the Jolly Roger.

Yo-ho! Yo-ho! Yo-ho!

\*Optional version: Chasing after plunder to the poles and back again.

Often sung by high school and collegiate level singers, R. Ritchie Robertson's, "The Jolly Roger" has been a popular repertoire choice among voice teachers and students alike since it was included in the widely available, *The First Book of Baritone/Bass Solos*, an anthology that comes complete with accompaniment CDs<sup>39</sup>. Its

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<sup>39</sup> Joan Frey Boytim, ed., *The First Book of Baritone/Bass Solos* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1991), 56.

rollicking melody incorporating colorful tales of treasure hunting pirates proves its place within this collection as well.

Beginning with an exclamatory “Ship Ahoy!, Yo-ho!,” the pirate can be imagined standing on the deck of the ship as it “glides o’er the main.” The singer continues pledging his loyalty to the black flag that is the “Jolly Roger.” Plenty of dotted rhythms appear in the voice as they sit atop a *marcato*, mostly triadic accompaniment. Although the piano part is to be played in a detached style, the singer is encouraged to keep a connected, ever-flowing line in the voice, relying more on the indicated dynamic changes and tempo shifts to convey the drama.

The voice is marked *parlando* in the song’s middle section. Modulating to F minor, the buccaneer describes the shifty-eyed, water rats and jailbirds in his company. Yet as he continues, he speaks of their sense of camaraderie. Marked with a *poco ritardando*, the words “fighting side by side” are sung with an air of proud solidarity as the music shifts back to the more celebratory F major.

The song concludes with a final statement of the main melodic material, and then ends as it began. With three joyous shouts of “Yo-ho!” the singer is given the option of a high F4 on the final note. Considering its discretionary text and optional lower pitches, “The Jolly Roger” is befitting for the advanced performer and beginner alike.

## Pirate Song (1934)

Range: A3 – C4

Music and text by Cyrus Hall McCormick Jr. (1859 – 1936)

Oh! hey, my lads you'll all be glad  
 To join our pirate crew,  
 While others flee, we sweep the sea  
 As other pirates do,  
 In blowing gales we crowd on sail,  
 No quarter do we give:  
 And our victim's plight is our delight  
 And never a man shall live.

With a skimming log we drink our grog,  
 Heave ho! for a deadman's thirst!  
 With a cutlass keen and our sinews lean,  
 We are ready to do our worst.  
 As pirates bold in search of gold,  
 We sail to ev'ry zone.  
 If we do not hang together  
 Ev'ry man will hang alone.

Set in C major with an *allegro* tempo in 4/4, the charming, albeit brief “Pirate Song” contains a melody built entirely on swinging, dotted rhythms. Sung by a buccaneer to his fellow lads, he exalts their trade, glorifying the merits of piracy with robust enthusiasm. Relaying a theme of “All for one, and one for all” the singer finally states, “If we do not hang together, every man will hang alone” – a well put sentiment from the lips of a team player.

The song's range comprised of only a tenth extending from A3 to C4, as well as its brevity and undemanding nature, makes this song a viable repertoire choice for the young singer. Moreover, its inclusion in a recital set, amongst other pirate recruitment songs, would be most appropriate.

## Pirate Treasure (1934)

Range: C3 – F4

Music by Maurice Baron (1889 – 1964)

Text by Abbie Farwell Brown (1859 – 1927)

A lady loved a swaggering rover;  
The sev'n salt seas he voyaged over,  
Bragged of a hoard none could discover,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

She bloomed in a mansion dull and stately  
And as to Meeting she walk'd sedately,  
From the tail of her eye she liked him greatly,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Rings in his ears and a red sash wore he,  
He sang her a song and he told her a story;  
"I'll make ye Queen of the Ocean," swore he,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

She crept from bed by her sleeping sister;  
By the old gray mill he met and kissed her.  
Blue day dawned before they missed her,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

And while they prayed her out of Meeting,  
Her wild little heart with bliss was beating,  
As seaward went the lugger fleeting,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Choose in haste and repent at leisure;  
A buccaneer life is not all pleasure.  
He set her ashore with a little treasure,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Off he sailed where waves were dashing,  
Knives were gleaming, cutlasses clashing.  
And a ship on jagged rocks went crashing,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Over his bones the tides are sweeping;  
The only trace of the rover sleeping  
Is what he left in the lady's keeping,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Two hundred years is his name unspoken,  
The secret of his hoard unbroken;

But a black-browed race wears the pirate's token,  
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

The wordy “Pirate Treasure” by Maurice Baron includes the first nine stanzas of Abbie Farwell Brown’s original ten-stanza poem of the same name. The story surrounds a woman who falls in love with a dashing pirate, with whom she secretly has a child. The final stanza not included here is as follows:

Sea-blue eyes that gleam and glisten,  
Lips that sing,—and you like to listen—  
A swaggering song. It might be this one;  
“Hey! Jolly Roger, O.”

The song’s central characteristic is its rather awkward line ending rhythms. These moments are found throughout the song and appear as a figure of either two eighth notes or an eighth note followed by a quarter, landing heavily on beat three of the 4/4 measures. The placement of this distinguishing accent not only sounds out of place with the natural gait of the voice, but it also does not allow the singer proper time to breathe for the next phrase. The result is unsettling to the listener and makes for a tricky performance for the musicians.

Because the composer is so committed to this repeated rhythmic rhyme scheme, the song struggles to develop dramatic interest. Baron does attempt to reconcile the mostly plodding accompaniment by increasing chromaticism in each subsequent stanza, but in doing so, only creates a more muddled texture. If chosen as a performance piece, the singer and accompanist must be in agreement as to where to breathe and stretch measures if necessary.

## Ballad of the Pirates (1938)

Range: G2 – G4

Music and text by Lily Strickland (1884 – 1958)

In olden days were pirates bold,  
 Yo ho, my lads, yo ho, yo ho!  
 Who sail'd upon the deep blue sea,  
 You ho, my lads, yo ho, yo ho!  
 They lived most reckless lives, we're told,  
 With manners that were much too free;  
 They scuttled all the ships they'd meet,  
 And 'sang or fought with equal glee!  
 Yo Ho!

Oh, a pirate's life is gay and free,  
 Yo ho, my lads, and away we go;  
 The only life is lived at sea,  
 Yo ho, my lads, let the wild winds blow!  
 We'll live a short and merry life,  
 With hearty song and lusty strife!  
 O who a poor landlubber would be  
 When he could sail a ship at sea.

And oft they took their stolen gold,  
 Yo ho, my lads, yo ho, yo ho!  
 On tropic isles to hide away,  
 Yo ho, my lads, yo ho!  
 And tho' they're gone, these pirates bold,  
 Men seek their treasure to this day!  
 The fishes swim among their bones,  
 And no one hears their ghosts who say,  
 "Yo ho, yo ho!"

Oh, a pirate's life is brave and free,  
 Yo ho, my lads, soon we all must go!  
 And now they lie beneath the sea,  
 Yo ho, my lads, but the winds still blow.  
 Their lives were short, and now their bones  
 Lie molding down with Davy Jones;  
 And no one heeds their lonely hail  
 When ships across their graves do sail.  
 Yo ho! Yo ho! Yo ho!

This is the second of two pirate songs by Lily Strickland found in this collection.

Much like Strickland's earlier 1920 composition "Luck's Buccaneer", "Ballad of the

Pirates” speaks to the freedoms and wealth obtained from the pirate lifestyle. The difference here is that Strickland now also references the darker side of piracy, referring to the reckless and fleeting lives of the bandits whose bones now lay molding at the bottom of the sea.

Initially, the vocalist may find it challenging to hear their melody in the accompaniment for it is not always found in the treble notes of the right hand. The accompaniment is indeed more complex than other pirate songs of this time, but the piano does support the singer through blocked and broken chords throughout and provides further assistance by doubling the more difficult chromatic melodies of the voice.

Strickland breaks the song into three sections indicated by change of meter. Beginning in common time the singer presents eight measures of tuneful melodic material describing the “olden days” as bold pirates sailed the sea. Then, a more percussive 2/4 section takes over. An *accelerando* passage evokes the “reckless” nature of the pirates who “scuttled all the ships they’d meet.” Ending this ten-measure section with a *ritardando* on “Yo-ho!,” a 6/8 *animato* section then ensues for the next 24 measures offering a buoyant and jovial feel as the lyrics speak of the “gay and free,” albeit brief, pirate life. The song then repeats the overall strophic formula again. The use of these three metrically diverse sections not only textually breaks up the thoughts of the narrator, but also creates aural interest for the listener.

The song’s final verse takes on an ominous tone as it ends highlighting the text about the pirates’ bones “molding down with Davy Jones.” The voice descends stepwise “into the grave,” while various minor chord statements in the piano represent the morbid

sounds of tolling funeral bells. The singer concludes with three dramatic proclamations of “Yo-ho!” each outlining the notes of the C minor triad. As the final high G is sung, the piano finishes with a three-measure statement containing an unexpected penultimate  $f^{\#}7$  chord, which then resolves to its final tonic resting place in C minor.

A noteworthy aspect of the song is the placement of various Italianate mood indications in the score including *robusto*, *doloroso*, *animato*, and rarely seen terms like *temperatamente* and *gioiosamente*. The singer should be mindful of the composer’s intentions here.

Containing a bravura accompaniment, the song’s overall piano texture is quite thick and may require a bigger voice capable of being heard over the din. Moreover, the vocal range is a full two octaves and the constant melodic material doesn’t allow the singer much time to rest. The soloist should pace himself accordingly, utilizing the song’s dynamic contrasts to help conserve vocal stamina.

## The Lion of Java (1938)

Range: A3 – E4

Music and text by Harold Cohen (dates unknown)

I am Lion of Java.  
 I fear no foe at sea  
 Home from the Strait of Sunda  
 My prahu's<sup>40</sup> running free.  
 My creese<sup>41</sup> hilt's rich with silver,  
 My sarong's<sup>42</sup> red like wine,  
 The men's gay smiling faces  
 Spell booty rich and fine.

Back to our lair on Bali  
 Where women wait our ease  
 Sail home, my fighting bravos,  
 Free from the tossing seas.  
 I am the Lion of Java.  
 No foe in all the sea  
 Will face my daring onset  
 When I am sailing free.

Subtitled (“The Song of the Malayan Pirate”), “The Lion of Java” contains two brief verses describing a pirate ship and her crew as they sail home from a recent raid in the western Pacific Ocean. As the proud captain sings his victory song, he asserts his status as the most feared foe in all the sea.

Harold Cohen composed the song in a modified strophic form, with a slightly reworked vocal line in the second verse. The piano part contains mostly triadic and added tone block chords and is also altered in the second stanza as it begins with both hands playing in the treble clef. The characteristic feature of the accompaniment is the frequent appearance of a rhythmic motive comprised of an eighth note triplet ascending by half-step to two quarter notes that then descend a full octave to a half note below. Though the

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<sup>40</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

song is comprised of only 39 measures, this motive appears eleven times providing a relaxed, laidback atmosphere to the song, which speaks to the contented nature of the pirate crew.

With its tranquil and legato melody, straightforward phrasing, and harmonically supportive accompaniment, “The Lion of Java” is suitable for the beginning and advanced singer alike.

## Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee (1941)

Range: B4 – F5

Music by Jess Meeker (1912 – 1997)

Text by Mildred Plew Meigs (1892 – 1944)

Ho, for the Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee!  
He was as wicked as wicked could be,  
But oh, he was perfectly gorgeous to see!  
The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee.

His conscience, of course, was as black as a bat,  
But he had a floppety plume on his hat .  
And when he went walking it jiggled like that!  
The plume of the Pirate Dowdee!  
Deep in the ocean the mermaids went splash,  
Because of Don Durk of Dowdee.

Moreover, Dowdee had a purple tattoo,  
And stuck in his belt, where he buckled it through,  
Were a dagger, a dirk and a squizzamaroo!  
For fierce was the Pirate Dowdee.

It's true he was wicked as wicked could be,  
His sins they outnumbered a hundred and three,  
He kept in a cavern, this buccaneer bold,  
A curious chest that was covered with mold.

Ho for the pirate Don Durk of Dowdee!  
His conscience, of course, it was crook'd like a squash,  
But both of his boots made a slithery slosh,  
He went through the world with a wonderful swash,  
And oh, he was perfectly gorgeous to see,  
Ho! Ho! The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee!

This once popular children's poem by Mildred Plew Meigs contains rollicking, colorful language that paints exciting pictures of a fierce, adventuresome pirate named Don Durk of Dowdee. The poem's lovely rhythmic alliteration ("He kept in a cavern, this buccaneer bold, a curious chest that was covered with mold") and onomatopoeia ("Deep the ocean the mermaids went splash" and "Both of his boots made a slithery slosh") is

brought to life musically by composer Mr. Jess Meeker. The end result is delightful and fitting for the both the male and female soloist alike.

At times, both the melodies of the piano and voice alternate between A melodic minor and A harmonic minor. Other times, the accompaniment exudes a modal quality as it ascends by whole step with marching triads built on D major, C major, and E major. The resulting sound builds suspense for the listener as the vocalist brings the pirate to life through vivid poetic descriptions. Set in compound duple 6/8 time, the piano's vertical chord emphasis on beats one and four, along with a steady helping of rolling eighth notes, also support the voice and provide a continuous sense of forward motion.

The vocal melody is doubled much of the time by the piano and the singer is offered frequent opportunities for dynamic contrast. For example, a quirky pianissimo section appears on the words "His conscience of course, was as black as a bat, but he had a floppety plume on his hat..." The melody here contains a conjunct, ascending passage of whole steps, which are also sounded in the treble noted of the piano – a characteristic that appears frequently in the rest of the song. Another feature of the vocal line includes the many downward arpeggiations of successive A minor and E minor chords. Extra care should be given by the singer here as these passages are more difficult to navigate and require an exacting pitch.

## Pirate Story (1941)

Range: E4 – F5

Music by Roland Leich (1911 – 1995)

Text by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894) from *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
 Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
 Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
 And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
 Wary of the weather and steering by a star?  
 Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
 To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea—  
 Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
 Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
 The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

Roland Leich's setting of "Pirate Story" is a challenging piece for both singer and accompanist. Set for medium high voice (tenor or soprano), the song contains an unsettled metric gait caused by its emphasis on off-beats and unexpected rests. Together, with its alternating loud and soft phrases, these elements provide a stormy interpretation of the child-like text. The melody, built primarily on sequenced phrases, is quick and difficult, with high levels of chromaticism. However, the vocal line is usually doubled in the piano, which provides some stability for the singer.

Leich adheres to the Stevenson poem precisely as it was written, without variation, and colors it with ample text painting. At the opening, the piano part depicts the stormy waves while the singer's melody, marked *leggiero*, mimics the gentler spring winds. While the overall mood, heavy and unsettling, may be questionable, this setting does provide a contrast to others of this Stevenson poem, which are usually light and

playful. It would be a fine choice if one were planning to include several versions of “Pirate Story” in a recital.

## Hidden Treasure (1946)

Range: G2 – D4

Music by C. Armstrong Gibbs (1889 – 1960)

Text by Bernard Martin (1912 – 1998) from the novel, “Red Treasure”

There were rubies red from Pegu,  
And iv’ries from Cathay,  
But they’re lost and gone forever  
Or so the tallies say,  
When a ship was sunk at the harbour bar  
A curse on the devil of a Sharbandar<sup>43</sup>!

And those rubies red from Pegu  
And the iv’ries of Cathay  
Were stolen and hid forever  
Where there ain’t no light o’ day,  
And now none knows where them sparklers are  
A curse on the devil of a Sharbandar!

But the rubies red as blood  
And the iv’ries white as bones  
Have sent a score of ruffians  
Along o’ Davy Jones;  
So stick to your ship, you jolly, jolly tar  
And curse that devil of a Sharbandar!

“Hidden Treasure” is the first of four songs from composer C. Armstrong Gibbs’s *Songs of the Mad Sea Captain*, published 1946. The texts of all four songs are taken from the young-adult fiction novel *Red Treasure*, authored by Bernard Martin one year earlier in 1945. *Red Treasure* is a rattling yarn of lost rubies, Burmese tribesmen, Pacific white-cliffed islands, and prisoners held hostage. In the book, Captain Adam is a mad and ferocious sea-dog who has washed ashore on one of these islands in search of the fabled rubies from Pegu. The captain captures the narrator of the tale (a teen boy) and forces him (by tying him to a tree) to listen to several of his songs, which he sings as the author

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<sup>43</sup> A Sharbandar was a kind of Governor under the King of Siam (now Lower Burma). Bernard Martin, *Red Treasure* (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), 13.

describes in a fine bass voice, with all the mannerisms of an opera star.<sup>44</sup> Though all four songs describe adventures at sea, only two (“Hidden Treasure” and “The Golden Ray”) speak specifically of pirates and plunder.

Set in G minor, “Hidden Treasure” begins *con moto* with a short melodic piano introduction. As the piano adjusts to provide a mostly quarter note block chord foundation for the singer, the captain’s voice enters with an equally straightforward melody. Delivering the story of the lost treasure, the singer crescendos to the word “curse.” The piano rests here for dramatic effect as the voice hastily finishes out the phrase, “. . . on the devil of a Sharbandar.” The listener is now beginning to feel an uneasiness regarding the captain.

The piano repeats its opening material as an interlude to the second verse and the captain continues his tale. The piano now provides a thicker harmonic texture with a faster harmonic rhythm mirroring the vocalist, non-chord tones, and the use of countermelody. Utilizing the composer’s marked dynamic contrasts, the voice alternates between spooky, hushed pianissimos (“but the rubies red as blood”) and ranting fortes (“So stick to your ship, you jolly, jolly, tar”). As the final line is stated, the singer holds “curse” twice as long as in the previous two strophes, and then descends on “devil of a Sharbandar,” from a D4 down to the final pitch at G2.

“Hidden Treasure” serves as an appropriate platform for the singer to develop and showcase their acting and storytelling skills. It is essential for the vocalist to communicate a steadily escalating sense of foreboding in the song. In doing so, he will successfully forewarn the audience that any sailor rash enough to seek the lost pirate treasure, is bound to end up in Davy Jones’ locker.

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<sup>44</sup> Martin, 90, 96.

## The Golden Ray (1946)

Range: B3 – D4

Music by Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1889 – 1960)

Text by Bernard Martin (1912 – 1998) from the novel, “Red Treasure”

O, hark ye lubbers, in a far-off sea,  
There's a beautiful land-locked bay,  
Where the wind sings soft  
And they never go aloft,  
Nor are drench'd with driving spray,  
Nor are drench'd with driving spray.

On the shores of that bay in the Indian sea  
Where the sun burns hot all day,  
The water at night  
Shines phosphorus bright,  
But a sailor can't spend his pay,  
But a sailor can't spend his pay.

Yet 'twas in this bay of a land-locked sea  
That the crew of the Golden Ray  
Was fought and beaten,  
Then cooked and eaten  
By pirates from Malay,  
By pirates from Malay.

O, hark, ye lubbers that put to sea,  
For the treasures of far Cathay,  
If ye stay in port  
Ye'll never be caught,  
Like the crew of the Golden Ray,  
Like the crew of the Golden Ray.

This is the fourth and final song from C. Armstrong Gibbs's *Songs of the Mad Sea Captain*. “The Golden Ray” is sung at a point in Bernard Martin's book *Red Treasure* when the fanatically mad and now recently wounded Captain throws off his clothes and runs into the sea to wash his blood-spattered body. He sings as the book's narrator describes, “with his magnificent voice a song I had not heard before ... I was fascinated

by the rolling tune and stood listening.”<sup>45</sup> Marked *con brio ma non troppo*, the accompaniment begins tunefully in D major with a short three-measure melodic prelude. A sprightly moving eighth note pattern in the second measure beautifully depicts the captain’s naked form bounding into the water. As the captain begins singing, he maintains a jovial manner. By way of a buoyant melody, the first two musical stanzas describe a stunning, phosphorescent bay in the Indian Ocean. The forward momentum of the accompaniment provides a clear harmonic foundation for the singer, while also offering its own countermelodies. This delightful interplay between piano and voice creates a sonically refreshing result but also gives a disturbing feeling to the listener who is aware the crazed nature of the captain.

The singer’s tone turns serious with the arrival of the *meno mosso* middle section in B minor. The captain speaks eerily of how in this beautiful inlet, “the crew of the *Golden Ray* was fought and beaten, then cooked and eaten, by pirates from Malay.” Added *forte* emphasis is given on the words “fought, beaten, cooked, and eaten” to further astonish the listener.

The song’s AABA form ends with the same D major melody as in the first verse as a final word of warning is issued. The singer merrily advises not to put to sea in search of treasure saying, “If ye stay in port, ye’ll never be caught”; a message the mad sea captain has been emphasizing throughout the Bernard Martin novel.

All in all, “The Golden Ray” and “Hidden Treasure” are cleverly composed. The cheerful melodies, to which C. Armstrong Gibbs sets the unstable captain’s ravings, clearly illustrate his lunacy and give the listener an unsettling feeling about his character.

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<sup>45</sup> Martin, 129.

## Captain Kidd (1948)

Range: A3 – F4

Music by Gene Bone (1915 – 1992) and Howard Fenton (b.1917)

Text by Stephen Vincent Benét (1898 – 1943)

This person in the gaudy clothes is worthy Captain Kidd.  
They say he never buried gold. I think, perhaps he did.  
They say it's all a story that his favorite little song  
Was "Make these lubbers walk the plank!" I think perhaps, they're wrong.

They say he never pirated beneath the Skull and Bones,  
He merely traveled for his health and spoke in soothing tones.  
In fact, you'll read in nearly all the newer history books  
That he was mild as cottage cheese, but I don't like his looks!

This short, humorous narrative for baritone or mezzo-soprano contains some awkward but effective leaps, as the singer gives their impression of the infamous pirate, Captain Kidd. The dense accompaniment rarely doubles the vocal line and employs rich chromatic chords as well as broken chord support in the left hand. Its most characteristic feature is an interesting recurring two-measure countermelody in the right hand. This quirky, brisk figure comprised of four sixteenth notes, four eighth notes and a quarter note, serves as a unifying device, appearing both at the beginning and end of each verse.

Composers Gene Bone and Howard Fenton were a Tin Pan Alley songwriting duo who also began to collectively compose sacred music in 1948 (the same year "Captain Kidd" was published). As a 1949 New York United Press newspaper article stated regarding the composing team: "They started writing religious music more than a year ago when word reached their ears that Bible sales were hitting an all-time high and church attendance was increasing."<sup>46</sup> In the article, when the interviewer asks Fenton if they will one day return to their Tin Pan Alley roots, Fenton responds, "Of course we'll

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<sup>46</sup> Claire Cox, United Press Staff Correspondent, New York, "Tin Pan Alley in New Venture: Composers Turn to Church Music," *Warsaw Daily Times*, 29 October, 1949.

have to go back to moon and June stuff pretty soon. Song writers have to eat you know.”<sup>47</sup>

Bone and Fenton composed the music of “Captain Kidd” (1948) to have fits and starts, as the song’s many abrupt musical changes in tempo, dynamics, and tonality indicate. This lack of natural flow is not off-putting but may require extra practice from the accompanist and singer. The score is also filled with a plethora of detailed instructions to the vocalist on how to interpret and act most of the phrases. Examples include: (*slower, with humor*), (*at will*), (*with gruff humor*), (*softer, almost spoken*), (*with grim doubt*), (*quieter with mild mockery*), (*softer, with pointed humor*), (*savagely fast*), and so forth. It seems the composers were overzealous in this regard, yet, admittedly, the musical material and poetry both mirror these instructions with precision.

Though the song is set in D minor throughout, the final measures end in an A major chord, creating a half cadence. The perceptive audience may recognize the piano’s final “horn-call” statement of two consecutive ascending intervals; a fourth followed by a fifth. The first interval ascends from E to A and the second continues ascending from A to E. It seems Bone and Fenton are giving a nod to Richard Wagner’s own sea-inspired character as they recall the “Dutchman motif” from *Der fliegende Holländer*.

“Captain Kidd” is a fitting choice for teaching flexibility of tempo and narrative style to a student singer and would also work well into a recital set surrounding the lives of historical pirates.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## A Pirate Song (1952)

Range: D3 – E4

Music by William R. Smith (d.1993)

Text by William Cuthbert Robb (fl. 1921 – 1958)

When I grow up I'm going to be a pirate,  
Sailing on the deep blue sea,  
With a pirate crew and a Jolly Roger too,  
And the captain of the ship will be me!  
We'll have guns and daggers, cutlasses and knives,  
And pieces of eight by scores,  
And Spanish doubloons and diamonds too,  
And chests full of gold moidores.

We'll shout "Yo-ho!" and "Avast!" and "Belay!"  
As we sail by tropical isles,  
And we'll capture and rake all ships we overtake  
And we'll throw the crews to the crocodiles.  
We'll have salted pork and hard tack for dinner ev'ryday,  
And sausages and shrimp for tea,  
And we'll all go paddling and bathing when we like.  
Oh come and be a pirate with me,  
Oh come and be a pirate  
Come and be a pirate,  
Come and be a pirate with me!

"When I grow up I'm going to be a pirate," states the singer as he enters with a jaunty melody very similar to the famed "Sailor's Hornpipe" tune sung aboard many a sailing vessel throughout history. "A Pirate Song" provides a glimpse into the mind of an adolescent who wishes to be a captain of his own ship. The naiveté of the youth is apparent as he cheerfully lists the many treasures he will amass while at sea. Pattering on, he glorifies his station using a plethora of stereotypical pirate jargon.

When all is said and done, this pirate recruitment song from the eyes of a child lasts only about 60 seconds. With its tuneful vocal line, limited range, and short four-measure phrases that allow ample time for breathing, this entertaining ditty is the perfect selection for the younger voice eager to hone their acting abilities upon the stage.

Furthermore, “A Pirate Song” would be a wonderful addition to a set of pirate songs spoken from the child’s perspective, perhaps along with “Pirate Song” by Horace Johnson and/or “Song of Perfect Propriety” by Seymour Barab. Refer to the *Special Characteristics Index* (p.178) for additional choices.

## Pirate Gold (1954)

Range: B3 – D4

Music by George French (fl. 1950 – 1954)

Text by Marion Aston (pseud. of Marion J. French) (fl.1954 – 1959)

A pirate bold is Morgan,  
 Who sails the Caribbean,  
 He sacks and burns and plunders  
 The fattest and the lean.  
 No ship is safe from his fury,  
 And all she has he'll take,  
 No town is safe from murder,  
 In fear of him they quake, Yo-Ho!

So here's to Captain Morgan,  
 The booty he has snared,  
 The silver, gold and jewels,  
 There's plenty to be shared,  
 From Trinidad to Rio,  
 Panama to Spain  
 Come sail with Captain Morgan,  
 And scourge the Spanish Main.

The fairest of the women,  
 In vain they try to run,  
 The wine flows by the barrel  
 With brandy, gin and rum.  
 There's gold encrusted goblets  
 And rubies by the score,  
 With amethysts and opals  
 And diamonds galore, Yo-Ho!

So here's to Captain Morgan,  
 The booty he has snared,  
 The silver, gold, and jewels,  
 There's plenty to be shared.  
 From Trinidad to Rio,  
 Panama to Spain,  
 Come sail with Captain Morgan  
 And scourge the Spanish Main.

There'll be blows and wounds and bruises,  
 You'll curse each rising sun  
 That bids you raise your cutlass,  
 Another fight has come,  
 In battle you may perish,  
 In a skirmish deadly won,

But you will be a king of the sea  
Until your day is done.

So here's to Captain Morgan  
As black as he is bold  
And here's to realizing  
Your dreams of wealth untold,  
From Trinidad to Rio,  
Panama to Spain  
Come sail with Captain Morgan  
And scourge the Spanish Main.  
So come and share his Pirate Gold!

“Pirate Gold” is among the several pirate recruitment songs found herein that has a twist not found in the others. The speaker here is inviting the listener to join Captain Henry Morgan’s crew, specifically. The song is composed entirely in B minor and as the piano introduction states the song’s first notes, the melody sounds remarkably similar to Edvard Grieg’s “In the Hall of the Mountain King”. The voice enters *a tempo, robust and virile*, and restates the tuneful melody while the accompaniment texture shifts to a more supportive role. Supplying a playful, galloping rhythmic figure comprised of foundational eighth note chords on the strong beats and two sixteenth notes on the weak beats, the piano charges on as the singer delivers his exhortation regarding the virtues of Morgan’s pirate band.

The poem’s fifth stanza contains different musical material altogether, characterized by a thinner accompaniment texture of half-note chords. Though remaining in B minor, this section communicates a gloomier atmosphere as the singer describes the daily rough, tough living, and deadly fighting that will take place onboard Morgan’s ship. However, this mood brightens as the recruiter proclaims *exultantly* in a broad, accented phrase, “But, you will be the king of the sea, until your day is done.”

The speaker ends his sales pitch with a final melodic refrain, singing “So come and share his pirate gold.” As the last word is held, the song ends happily with a Picardy cadence in D major giving the pitch a concluding positive spin.

Though stereotypical in pirate lyric and melody, the boisterous “Pirate Gold” is well constructed. Its tunefulness, reasonable range, and vivid illustrations make it a fine choice as a set opener or finale for the young to intermediate voice.

## Song of Perfect Propriety (1959)

Range: C4 – E5

Music by Seymour Barab (b.1921)

Text by Dorothy Parker (1893 – 1967)

Oh, I should like to ride the seas,  
 A roaring buccaneer;  
 A cutlass banging at my knees,  
 A dirk behind my ear.  
 And when my captives' chains would clank  
 I'd howl with glee and drink,  
 And then fling out the quivering plank  
 And watch the beggars sink.

I'd like to straddle gory decks,  
 And dig in laden sands,  
 And know the feel of throbbing necks  
 Between my knotted hands.  
 My slaves I'd like to bind with thongs  
 That cut and burn and chill...  
 But I am writing little songs,  
 As little ladies will.

Composed by Seymour Barab in 1959, this piece for mezzo-soprano is the first song in a collection of songs (*Songs of Perfect Propriety*) on poems by writer and satirist Dorothy Parker. The song exudes a sassy and sarcastic temperament, much like the disposition of the renowned poet herself.

Barab gives the tempo indication of *allegro barbaro* as the accompaniment begins in cut time with a pair of punchy rhythms comprised of two eighth notes followed by two quarter notes. This motive becomes the featured characteristic of the song as it continues outlining chord structures for the singer. Though the voice sings in an even 2/2 meter, the piano rhythms begin to vary the pattern ever so slightly. By stating subsequent repetitions of the figure on different beats of the measure, the result causes an offbeat triplet feel in the piano. Together the pairing makes for a unique, if complex, sound.

“Song of Perfect Propriety” is well-suited for an intermediate singer who does not need to rely completely on direct melodic support from the accompanist. A light touch to any program, it could also be sung as a stand-alone song by a male voice, which makes the ending that much more humorous as he unexpectedly states “But..., I am singing little songs..., as little ladies will.”

## Port Royal Tavern (1968)

Range: B $\flat$ 3 – F4

Music by Evan Thomas Davies (1878 – 1969)

Text by Arthur Glyn Prys-Jones (1888 – 1987)

I've been out with Henry Morgan ho, ho, fol-de-ro.  
 Sacking Porto Bello Town, ho, ho, fol-de-rol-de-ro.  
 And I've sailed the seas with Morgan  
 Where the Spanish ships go down fol-de-ro-de-ro.  
 He's a rare one, and a wonder,  
 For where Morgan goes, there's plunder,  
 It's a wild roaring life  
 A roaring life is buccaneering.

I've been out with Henry Morgan  
 Where the doubloons fall like rain,  
 Fol-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol-de-ro  
 And I'm going along with Morgan  
 When he outs to sea again,  
 Fol-de-ro fol-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol-de-ro  
 I've a load of gems and money,  
 You can have your pick my honey,  
 But I won't, won't stay,  
 And give up buccaneering.

I've been out Henry Morgan  
 When the lads were dropping fast,  
 And the chances are with Morgan  
 Any trip can be your last,  
 Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, fol-de-rol-de-ro  
 So I'm here for fun and drinking  
 Not for wedded bliss and thinking.  
 So kiss me lass, so kiss me lass,  
 And drink to buccaneering,  
 Fol-de-rol-de-fol-de-rol-de-ro.

Welsh organist, conductor, and composer E.T. Davies, known mostly for his arrangements of over one hundred Welsh folk songs, also composed a handful of his own songs for voice and piano. Davies composed this one in the penultimate year of his life at age 98. Setting the poetry of fellow Welshman, Glyn Prys-Jones, Davies brings to life the

speaker's praises of Captain Henry Morgan (the famed Welsh Buccaneer), *in a spirited and rollicking style.*

Set in 2/4 time, the piano begins with a vigorously difficult part that does not subside until the song's final notes. Comprised of brisk scalar sixteenth note passages in the right hand and octaves and triads in the left, the accompaniment is very independent of the vocal line. At the same time, the singer must utilize a coloratura approach in order to navigate the many melismatic vocal passages found in the score. Examples of these runs can be found in the varied statements of the word "Folderol." This nonsense word, used as a kind of refrain in the song, finishes out the speaker's statements with exclamatory fervor. The continuously busy voice and piano also have many concurrent statements of contrary motion. Together these features illustrate to the listener that each part is just as important as the other.

Though the broad-ranged and complex "Port Royal Tavern" is not a song that can be put together quickly, it is musically satisfying in the end. The speaker in this song tells of the daring and dangerous ways of Captain Morgan and how serving under him is always a great risk. Nevertheless, Morgan is a man who is well-liked and the men will continue to adventure with him. So it goes with learning this song. In this example, the rewards far outweigh the risks.

## Henry Morgan's March on Panama (1975) Range: B3 – F4

Music by Mansel Thomas (1909 – 1986)

Text by Arthur Glyn Prys-Jones (1888 – 1987)

Morgan's hair is matted, his lips are cracked and dry,  
His tawny beard is tangled and his plumed hat hangs awry:  
But his voice still booms like thunder through the steaming jungle glade  
As he marches bold as Lucifer, leading his gaunt brigade.

Twelve hundred famished buccaneers, bitten blistered and bled,  
A sweltering mob accursed and flayed by the fierce sun overhead:  
Twelve hundred starving scarecrows with hardly a crust to eat,  
And only sips from festering pools in that grim, monstrous heat.

Twelve hundred tortured musketeers creeping through clogging mud  
Where the reek of rotting mangroves wakes havoc in their blood:  
Twelve hundred worn-out wretches fevered and almost dead,  
But Morgan's fiery eloquence rallies them on ahead.

Twelve hundred tatterdemalions<sup>48</sup>, the sorriest maddest crew  
That ever the green savannahs saw when the Spanish bugles blew:  
Twelve hundred struggling skeletons who sprang to life and then  
In wild wave took Panama, for they were Morgan's men.

It is often said that Welshman, Sir Henry Morgan (1635 – 1688) was not an outlaw pirate, but a privateer authorized by an English Letter of Marque. This meant he held a paper issued by the English government (the governor of Jamaica in his case), empowering him to fight the Spaniards on England's behalf<sup>49</sup>.

For all intents and purposes however, Henry Morgan was a pirate. It is at this time in history, from around 1650 to 1725, in what has come to be known as “The Golden Age of Piracy”, that the terminology used to label pirates becomes a bit cloudy. The status of buccaneers as pirates or privateers was very ambiguous. As a rule, many pirates and buccaneers called themselves privateers, so as to sail under the protection of a Letter of

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<sup>48</sup> See vocabulary appendix.

<sup>49</sup> Patrick Pringle, *Jolly Roger: The Story of the Great Age of Piracy* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2001), 68-69.

Marque. In truth however, these violent men had little concern for the law and they exploited every opportunity to pillage their targets. Additionally, many of the letters used by privateers were either counterfeit or legally invalid, and Captain Morgan's notorious 1671 attack on the city of Panama was not at all authorized by his Letter of Marque<sup>50</sup>.

Published posthumously in the year of his death (1986), composer Mansel Thomas's, "Henry Morgan's March on Panama" vividly suggests Morgan and his men battling their way through the rough jungle as they march inland to sack the town. Thomas, whose catalogue of over 150 art songs for solo voice is largely dominated by settings of Anglo-Welsh poetry, composed this song in 1975.

Thomas successfully conveys the imagery and drama of the poetic text through his musical writing, and pushes the tonal envelope by using a kind of expanded harmonic vocabulary. For example, the chromatic piano accompaniment features an array of complex dissonances, making the tonal center difficult to surmise at times. Incessant quarter note chord clusters depict the marching feet of the pirates, while the frequently changing meter represents the men stumbling due to weakness and fatigue. A repeated rhythmic figure comprised of a triplet followed by the quarter note is reminiscent of a military call or cry to battle.

The voice sings in a bold declamatory style, outlining various triadic patterns that are set atop angular chord clusters in the piano below. Textual alliteration abounds in the song ("Twelve hundred famished buccaneers, bitten, blistered, and bled"), ("struggling skeletons who sprang to life") and the singer is charged with carrying it out, all the while contending with disjunct melodies and odd intervallic leaps. At times the voice and

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

accompaniment are drawn together with unison motives, creating a stirring, dramatic dimension to the piece.

“Henry Morgan’s March on Panama” is most appropriate for the mature voice or advanced singer capable of creating a full, rich vocal sound that is strong enough to be heard over the especially thick accompaniment texture.

## Pirate Story (1985)

Range: E4 – E5

Music by Seymour Barab (b.1921)

Text by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894) from *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
 Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
 Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
 And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
 Wary of the weather and steering by a star?  
 Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
 To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea—  
 Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
 Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
 The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

Seymour Barab creates a beautiful, whimsical mood with his setting of “Pirate Story” from Robert Louis Stevenson’s *A Child’s Garden of Verses*. Much of its whimsy can be attributed to the undulating accompaniment; a rhythmic ostinato alternating between root position major chords in the right hand and a single pitch, usually the sub-tonic, in the left hand. This flowing, eighth note piano accompaniment is disrupted only at the very end when it tumbles down to the finish.

In terms of rhythm and harmony, the composer has tied the vocal line and the piano accompaniment together seamlessly, allowing the singer a fair amount of certainty with this complex melodic material. The range is limited to an octave, and there is little dynamic variation, but as the piece lasts a mere 50 seconds, both go unnoticed.

Seymour Barab has captured the heart of the poetry. He encourages the singer to play with the text, employing the use of portamento and an indication that the final line

be *shouted*. Of the six settings found in this collection, this one stands out for its high artistic achievement and elegant playfulness.

## Pirate Story (1992)

Range: D4 – F#5

Music by Robin le Rougetel White (1908 – 1979)

Text by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894) from *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
 Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
 Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
 And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
 Wary of the weather and steering by a star?  
 Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
 To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea—  
 Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
 Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
 The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

Robin le Rougetel White's version of "Pirate Story" comes from his *Where Shall We Adventure?* collection of songs based on Robert Louis Stevenson's texts. Though published in 1992, White died in 1979, so the exact year of composition is unknown. The composer does not choose to highlight the child-like quality of the poem, but has pulled out a more mature interpretation that is still highly sensitive to the text.

The virtuosic accompaniment requires an accomplished pianist. In the piano part, the rising and falling sixteenth note arpeggios spanning nearly four octaves clearly illustrate the blowing winds and cresting waves that are spoken about in the poetry. The sudden slowing of the rhythmic pace at "Where shall we adventure, today that we're afloat," paints a picture of a ship that is momentarily drifting aimlessly.

The vocal line of the first verse, and most of the second, rises and falls in conjunction with the accompaniment's flowing, legato gestures. The melody rides the waves of further ascending and descending piano arpeggiations until the mood is

interrupted by “Hi!” at which time the piece takes a dramatic turn, with heavy accents in the piano and a *con forza* indication for the singer. The children make their escape from the charging enemies and the music returns to a calm, floating feeling, ending with a stately exclamation of the final line, “The wicket is the harbor and the garden is the shore.”

Shifting tonalities, increased chromaticism, and frequent tempo alterations give this piece a modern-sounding quality that would provide variety inside a set of pirate-themed songs. While White’s setting of “Pirate Story” may not be easy, it is a worthy endeavor and a fine art song, gratifying for both the artist and the audience.

## Captain Stratton's Fancy (2010)

Range: C3 – E4

Music by Gary Bachlund (b.1947)

Text by John Masefield (1878 – 1967)

Oh, some are fond of red wine and some are fond of white,  
And some are all for dancing by the pale moonlight,  
But rum alone's the tippie and the heart's delight  
Of the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of Spanish wine and some are fond of French,  
And some'll swallow tay and stuff fit only for a wench,  
But I'm for right Jamaica till I roll beneath the bench,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are for the lily and some are for the rose,  
But I am for the sugar cane that in Jamaica grows,  
For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some are fond of fiddles and a song well sung  
And some are all for music for to lit upon the tongue,  
But mouths were made for tankards and for sucking at the bung,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh, some that's good and godly ones they hold that it's a sin  
To troll the jolly bowl around and let the dollars spin,  
But I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.  
(Yes!) I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,  
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

This most recent setting of “Captain Stratton's Fancy” is another in the large repertoire of drinking songs written over the centuries, and contains a thoroughly modern sounding approach. Composed in 2010 by German-American composer Gary Bachlund, this setting of John Masefield's poem takes more time than the others to both to learn and comprehend.

The vocal part by itself is quite pleasing to the ear. The bold melody does occasionally contain some chromaticism in the form of descending half step passages, but

otherwise has an accessible tune. The accompaniment, however, is highly complex, with copious amounts of chromatic dissonance, many statements of ascending and descending whole-tone passages, and highly rhythmic dotted eighth and sixteenth note figures in contrary motion.

It is as though the singer is the sober figure, and the piano accompaniment is the drunkard. As the vocalist is charged with keeping the tune stable, the overly complicated piano part seemingly tries to lead the singer astray. With its busy accompaniment comprised of frequent changes in tempo, rhythmic underpinning, and tonal center, this sixth setting of “Captain Stratton’s Fancy” is recommended for the advanced singer, capable of maintaining his own melody in the midst of near chaos.

CHAPTER 3  
CONCLUSION

In preparing this document, one of the questions I asked myself was “What would I as a singer want to gain from such a resource?” Three things immediately came to mind: 1) I wanted to become better acquainted with the pirate song repertoire. 2) I wanted to be able to find the repertoire and acquire it. 3) I wanted to be able to understand and learn the repertoire’s challenges from a singer’s perspective. I have addressed and answered these questions in this document and feel confident that by compiling the information into one convenient format, it will prove useful to the performer and teacher alike. Furthermore, until now, no catalogue of pirate music exclusively devoted to the genre of art song has existed, so this document will be of great use to the field. This is a worthy body of repertoire, which merits performance in the vocal studio, recital stage, and concert hall, and this document represents an important first step in its dissemination.

Yet, in collecting, analyzing, and evaluating these 81 songs, it is evident that there are a multitude of other avenues that can be pursued within the genre. Further areas of research include but are not limited to, additional in-depth analyses of texts set numerous times (e.g. “Captain Stratton’s Fancy” and “Pirate Story,”) and detailed study of sub-genres (e.g. song texts that are no longer culturally acceptable or politically correct). A more contextual analysis regarding the cultural and historical implications of the songs would also be relevant and appropriate.

There exists genuinely a mix of songs—both in diversity of text and range in skill level—for the young to advanced singer, and now that they have been gathered into one volume, they should no longer be neglected, but should be sung. Thus, perhaps the most

compelling offshoot or by-product of this collected pirate song project is to facilitate performance of the songs. Naturally, a sheet music anthology will draw attention to the genre of pirate songs and further assimilate them into the vocal music canon. As this document illustrates, there is a wealth of possibilities as to the contents of such an anthology. One anthology might include a broad spectrum of subgenres or categories of pirate songs like those represented in the “Special Characteristics” index (e.g. stereotypical pirate songs with flash and flair, more sentimental and lyric serenades, songs sung from the child’s perspective, or songs pertaining to actual historical pirates). Another possibility could be an anthology that focuses on the subject of colonialist attitudes of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and how the various songs represented are reflections of societal outlooks of the times.

My preferred next step is to pare down these 81 pirate songs into an anthology that will give the best overview of the collection as a whole. Based on my analyses, I would like to pursue an anthologized 15 songs that are representative of the vast array of thematic and musical material herein. Should the resulting collection prove to be of help stimulating anyone’s interest in exploring the realm of pirate art songs for voice and piano, its purpose will have been accomplished.

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## APPENDIX E

VOCABULARY APPENDIX<sup>51</sup>

<u>appal</u> [əpəl]	(variant of <i>appall</i> ) : to overcome with consternation or horror : fill with fear, astonishment, or amazement.
<u>bo'sun</u> [bosn]	(variant of <i>boatswain</i> ) : a petty officer on a merchant ship having immediate supervision of the deck force, of boat crews, and of work parties engaged in maintenance of the hull, anchors, boats, and related equipment.
<u>capstain</u> [kæpstən]	(variant of <i>capstan</i> ) : a machine for moving or raising heavy weights (as in hoisting an anchor) that consists of a vertical drum which can be rotated and around which cable is turned.
<u>cavil</u> [kævl]	to quibble, object or criticize adversely for trivial reasons.
<u>creese</u> [kris]	(variant of <i>kris</i> ) : a Malay or Indonesian dagger often with two scalloped cutting edges and ridged serpentine blade.
<u>Dey</u> [de]	a ruling official of the Ottoman empire in northern Africa; <i>especially</i> : a governor of Algiers before the French conquest in 1830.
<u>divil</u> [divl]	a dialectal variant of <i>devil</i> .
<u>dow'r</u> [daʊə]	(variant of <i>dower</i> or <i>dowry</i> ) : the money, goods, or estate that a woman brings to her husband in marriage : a bride's portion.
<u>foemen</u> [fomen]	(plural of <i>foeman</i> ) : an enemy in war.
<u>grapnel</u> [græpnəl]	a small anchor with four or five flukes or claws used in dragging or grappling operations and for anchoring a dory or skiff.
<u>moidore</u> [mɔɪdɔr]	a gold coin of Portugal and Brazil that was minted from about 1640 to 1732 and contained 4.93 grams of fine gold.
<u>mort</u> [mɔrt]	a great quantity or number : an abundance.

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<sup>51</sup> All vocabulary term definitions are from *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*.

<u>prahu</u> [pɹɑhu]	one of several usually undecked Indonesian boats propelled by sails, oars, or paddles.
<u>sarong</u> [səɹɔŋ]	a loose skirt that is made of a long strip of cloth wrapped around the body and held in place by tucking or rolling at the waist and is worn chiefly by men and women of the Malay archipelago and the Pacific islands.
<u>scow</u> [skaʊ]	a large flat-bottomed boat with broad square ends.
<u>stun'sails</u> [stʌnslz]	(variant of <i>studding sail</i> ) : a light sail set at the side of a principle square sail of a vessel in free winds to increase its speed.
<u>sue</u> [su]	to pay court or suit to : to woo.
<u>tar</u> [tɑr]	(short for <i>tarpaulin</i> ) : seaman, sailor.
<u>tatterdemalion</u> [tætədɪmeljən]	a person dressed in ragged clothing : one who is disreputable in appearance.
<u>tay</u> [te]	a dialectal variant of <i>tea</i> .
<u>tipple</u> [tɪpl]	an intoxicating beverage or drink.

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