To: Dr. Michael Green, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty

Fr: Dr. Rebecca Lister, Associate Professor of Music

Re: Sabbatical Report
First, I would like to thank the sabbatical committee and former Dean Brian Hearsey for providing me with this incredible opportunity. This semester has been not only professionally fulfilling, but personally uplifting as well. It has also provided some challenges for my future development and research.

My sabbatical proposal serves as the format for this report and outlines my activities for the semester.

**Rationale**

The importance and relevance of my project remained constant throughout the semester, and I was reminded time and again how much of the art song repertoire in Spanish is still relatively unknown. This is because, as I discovered, much of the music is extremely difficult to obtain. Many of the songs are out of print, are not contained in the most common vocal music compilations, are quite expensive, or are, at times, impossible to find using normal means.

I ordered some scores through interlibrary loan, but the majority of the scores came from Classical Vocal Reprints, an excellent source for more unusual repertoire. The scores I ordered contain songs which will be featured in my recital on March 21, and all are included in the catalogue which I continue to expand. Unfortunately, many of the scores listed in Sergius Kagen’s *Music for the Voice* (1968) and Jacqueline Cockburn and Richard Stokes’s *The Spanish Song Companion* (1992) are either out of print or are unobtainable.

**Research: Catalogue**

Attached is a copy of my catalogue. It is divided into two parts: works by composers from Spain, and works by composers from Latin America (Central and South America). I feel it is important to make this division because, while the vocal tradition in these countries share a common language, many differences distinguish and shape the art songs in these countries. Though the language is basically the same, musically speaking, the art songs within each country maintain their own distinct character and flavor. Dialects, cultural traditions, and dance rhythms are just a few of the issues that separate art songs in Spain from those in Latin America. Additionally, as will be discussed later, the Spanish language is not pronounced in the same way in Spain and Latin America. Singers must therefore use the correct pronunciation according to the nationality of the composer.

Each catalogue entry contains the following headings and information:

- Composer’s name and dates (full name, birth and death dates)
- Name of larger work or collection (Title, publisher, catalogue or ISBN number)
- Voice type (basic information/commentary about the composer and for whom the work is best suited)
- Song Title (translated into English, when possible; some words simply cannot be translated)
- Range (using the standard c4 for middle C, indicating the lowest note and highest note of the song)
- Comments (a brief musical analysis of each song, including poetic themes and how they are musically portrayed by the vocal line and accompaniment; also, technical challenges present)

I drew deeply upon Kathleen Wilson’s *The Art Song in Latin America* (1998) and Patricia Caicedo’s *The Latin American Art Song: a Critical Anthology and Interpretative Guide for Singers* (2005). Both contain not only the musical scores, but also crucial biographical information on the composers as well as translations of the songs. Many of the songs in my catalogue are featured in these two collections.

As I continue to uncover new repertoire, I will add it to my catalogue. This will be an ongoing project for me throughout my teaching career. It may also benefit my vocal colleagues, as it could possibly be worthy of
publication. It will also continue to be a quick reference for me so I can assign appropriate repertoire for my voice students.

**Skills Obtained: Language Competency**

This area has been the most difficult to achieve due to some unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances. While I had taken Spanish for several years in high school, I very much wanted to review the language in all aspects—vocabulary, grammar, verb tenses, etc. I was quite “rusty” in all of these areas.

My original intent was to study Spanish on a weekly basis with Professor Diane Iglesias. I studied with Diane until the week before she died suddenly in October. I was deeply saddened by Diane’s death, and for a time, was uncertain how to proceed. I knew the other Spanish professors at LVC were extremely busy, as they had to quickly cover Diane’s courses, so I could not ask them for help. It was too late to begin a formal course of any type, and I did not know where to turn.

I was extremely fortunate to come in contact with Guadalupe Barbra after reading about her in a newspaper article in the Lebanon Daily News. Barbra and her husband own and operate their grocery store, La Placita, in downtown Lebanon, and hail from Mexico. Barbra and three other colleagues operate the Centro Hispano de Lebanon, an organization that serves the Hispanic community in our area. In the past, Barbra has taught all ages of students in the Lebanon area who wish to learn Spanish for various reasons—business people starting a new job who want to speak to their Hispanic employees or colleagues, teachers who want to communicate more effectively with Hispanic students in their classrooms, or people who want to learn Spanish just for fun.

Ms. Barbra graciously agreed to meet with me on a weekly basis from one and a half to two hours per private session. Our sessions have been extremely helpful to me, and she utilizes a variety of interesting techniques to foster learning. Reading and writing in a foreign language is entirely different from having a conversation in that language, and my lessons with Ms. Barbra filled this critical point in my study.

I purchased RosettaStone, which was also quite useful. Its premise is quite appealing to me and can be summarized in this manner: human beings learn the meaning and context of words through pictures and sound, not by memorizing vocabulary words in a textbook. I am a visual learner, so RosettaStone’s process worked quite well for me. I completed levels Two and Three. The Levels are divided into four units; each unit is divided into four core lessons; each core lesson was divided into nine individual lessons and concluded with a Milestone (a real-life situation requiring instantaneous response). The individual lessons focus on reading, listening, and writing in Spanish, relating to a series of pictures. Though I cannot say I am fluent, I can say my overall skills have improved greatly in the past three months. RosettaStone was an excellent way of supplementing the work I did in my private sessions with Ms. Barbra and Professor Iglesias.

Utilizing the language skills I was obtaining on a daily basis allowed me to complete all of the translations for the songs I will perform on my recital. This was an important goal for me, as I wanted the translations to be my own and not from other sources. I wanted to capture not only the word-for-word meaning, but also the subtext and subtlety of each poem—not an easy task, even for native speakers. Diane Iglesias was extremely adept at translation and interpretation, so the majority of the translations were under her careful supervision. Professor Gabriela McEvoy also offered her assistance on several of the poems. I am extremely pleased with the end result and feel the audience will further enjoy the nuance of every word in these painstakingly constructed translations.
Attending this event was a fantastic way to begin my sabbatical project. The daily schedule for this conference was extremely intense and thorough. I can honestly admit I have not sung on such a rigorous basis since I was in graduate school! For example, every day, I had both a one-hour private lesson and a one-hour coaching with the gifted faculty and staff of the program. I especially enjoyed my coachings with Madrid-based Jorge Robaina, mainly because he coached the nuances and intricacies of the Spanish language so skillfully.

Also part of the daily schedule was an hour-long course in Spanish literature and diction. We studied the lives and works of the most monumental composers in Spain and Latin America, and while it was not in great depth, it provided a starting point for my research. Additionally, we learned the standard rules for transcribing Spanish into IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet). The subtle differences between how Spanish is spoken in Spain and Latin America was also covered. For example, in some areas of Spain, the letters C and Z are pronounced as [s], like the unvoiced “th” present in “thin.” Each student had the opportunity to read aloud various passages in Spanish and received feedback and suggestions from the professor. The professor for the course was renowned voice teacher and Spanish literature specialist Arden Hopkin from Brigham Young University.

Masterclasses occurred every afternoon, and I had the honor of performing on three different occasions. I benefited greatly in my own performances, but benefited even more by watching the other participants during their masterclass performances. While my project focuses on 20th- and 21st-century composers, I heard works from all style periods. I was exposed to some amazing literature, all incredibly varied in vocal style. Several songs I heard in the masterclasses appear in my catalogue.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the conference was something I had not anticipated. The website for the conference mentioned flamenco dancing and that a course for beginners would be offered. I did not realize until I got to the conference that all students were required to participate! At first, I was quite worried, as I am not skilled in dancing at all. As the week progressed, however, I found the dance classes to be my favorite part of the day. Not only were they an excellent form of exercise; they made me deeply aware of how the intricate rhythms, melismatic flourishes, and strong physical attitude in the flamenco tradition are the very foundation for much of the vocal music of Spain. The teachers of the course were gifted dancer, Antonio Vallejo, and professional guitarist, Juan Miguel Giménez. Both men are from Granada, Spain, the true heartland of flamenco. Both are steeped in the flamenco tradition and were inspiring—and quite patient—teachers.

The week concluded with a recital performance of all of the participants. I performed four different pieces: Ginastera’s Canción al arbol del olvido, Hernández’s La Madrileña, Estévez’s Arrunango, and Nin’s Paño Murciano. It was an excellent way to end the week. It was also quite emotional, as all of the participants and faculty had developed strong professional and personal bonds with one another during the week. While I did not win the competition held that evening, I was pleased with my performance, and was so glad to have the opportunity to attend this life-changing conference.

**Results: Student and Faculty Performance/Collaboration**

Much of what I hoped for the recital will come to fruition on March 20 and 21. On Saturday, March 20, Paraguayan guitarist Berta Rojas will once again grace the campus of LVC. Ms. Rojas is well-known for her interpretations of works by Hispanic composers. She will perform a recital of guitar music, and as an added bonus, I will have a chance to perform in conjunction with her. Ms. Rojas and I will perform Joaquin Rodrigo’s picturesque Tres Villancicos for soprano and guitar. I look forward to collaborating with such an internationally-known artist.
The next day, I will perform my own recital, accompanied by Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman. It will include a potpourri of composers from Latin America and Spain and will offer an array of compositional styles. Four different voice students will perform one song on the recital, including two students from my studio, one from Ms. Rose's studio, and one from Dr. Wojdyłak's studio. I will coach each of the students on diction, style, and dramatic presentation.

Singing is not the sole component of this recital. Another crucial aspect of the recital will include poetry readings by various native speakers, including Dr. Ivette Guzman, Dr. Gabriela McEvoy, and Guadalupe Barbra. I have asked each person to choose a poem that is special to them, either because of its thematic material or its poet. The audience will thus have a chance to hear Spanish in song, as well as Spanish in the spoken word, read aloud by native speakers.

I am always aware of visual learners in my audience, so I will once again include pictures of the composers, as well as landscape photos from their native countries. After every recital I have performed at LVC, at least one audience member thanks me for including visual components. The slides I utilize for my recitals create a more holistic performance experience. The audience can then form a connection to the composer and see him or her as a real, flesh and blood person, instead of defining him or her solely through aural means by a piece of music.

In conclusion, I have decided to dedicate this recital to the memory of Dr. Diane Iglesias. Diane helped inspire this project; she helped begin it; and she was in the process of helping me implement it when she died. It is only fitting that the project should end with her as well. That said, it will not be a somber affair, but a celebration of life, of music, and of language.

**Conclusion**

As I said in the opening paragraph, this semester has been full of challenges, but full of great rewards as well. Though the sabbatical is now coming to a close, in a way, it is really a beginning for me, too. My catalogue of Spanish works will continue to expand; I will begin the process of including repertoire in Spanish in my literature class and in my studio; I will continue to discover and champion works by Hispanic composers on future performances; and I will continue my weekly sessions with Guadalupe Barbra to refine my fluency.

Furthermore, a wide range of possible research topics have now caught my attention. Possible subjects for future research would be:

- Oscar Esplá's *Canciones playeras* (Songs of the Seashore), and their possible connection to the painter Emilio Varela.
- Other works by Argentinian composers, such as Carlos Guastavino's *Cuatro canciones coloniales* (Four Colonial Songs), or Alberto Ginastera's *Las horas de una estancia* (The Hours of a Large Room)
- Flamenco, the *cante jondo*, and their effects on classical art song composers of Spain

Again, I am forever grateful for this amazing opportunity for spiritual and mental growth. Thank you.

P.S.
Though it was not part of my original proposal (nor was it part of the subject matter of my sabbatical project), I felt it was important to add that I wrote an article for publication. In the summer of 2008, I agreed to write an article as part of a *Festschrift* for noted musicologist, Dr. Jeffery Kite-Powell. As a student of Kite-Powell at The Florida State University, I was one of the many students who performed in his ensembles. To celebrate his retirement, a colleague from Oklahoma State University (a former student himself as well), Dr. Allen Scott,
asked a group of Kite-Powell’s former students to submit articles on their areas of specialty. I agreed to do so long before I received my sabbatical, but the deadline for submission happened to be December 15, 2009, during the very same semester.

I wrote the article and was able to submit it by the deadline. It is entitled “The Great Divide.” The article outlines the many differences in training between singers specializing in early music and singers specializing in opera performance; it also highlights how each tradition can and must learn from one another. Currently, the Festschrift is undergoing the editorial process right now and is scheduled for publication in 2011.