

Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Final Report

Doctoral academic studies and a world premiere of a rediscovered work.

Submitted by Brent Wilson

Music Faculty

For Sabbatical during the Fall 2019 semester

The following report is a summary of projects worked on during the sabbatical taken during the Fall 2019 semester. I am thankful to the Board of Trustees for supporting this sabbatical and how it benefitted and continues to benefit our student populations at Ventura College. Not only do I have a better understanding of the populations coming into Ventura College from my academic studies, our students at VC benefitted from producing and performing a world premiere that would have otherwise been impossible without the sabbatical.

Background of the Sabbatical Project

There were two parts to my sabbatical.

1. Academic Studies

As more dual enrollment students were engaging in our Department, I felt that I needed to better understand how to engage those students in the same manner. My desire to pursue a doctorate degree stemmed from the need to understand y the difficulties students face in the ever-changing landscape of Arts support in our communities.

As I mentioned in my Sabbatical Proposal report, “the focus of my studies in my undergraduate and graduate studies were largely dedicated to performance and how to become a professional performer, singer, actor, and musician. There was an emphasis on pedagogy for singers, but a clear distinction was made between music education and music performance when completing your studies in music. Music Education degrees are pursued if you want to teach K-12, or if you plan to continue through doctoral music education studies and then teach college students how to teach K-12 students. Music Performance is what most instrumentalists and vocalists pursue if they want to pursue careers in performing music, whether playing in ensembles, as a soloist, or if they want to eventually teach in academia beyond secondary school.”

I felt that pursuing a doctorate that focuses on teaching and education would help me better connect to an increasing population that hasn't been afforded the same artistic experiences that one would expect when arriving as a college student. I receive students singing below a middle school level, not because of any fault of theirs, but due

to not having the same opportunities growing up in a well-supported Arts community. Learning new teaching tools and understanding new student populations was an important influence in what I wanted to focus on in my sabbatical.

2. World Premiere

I received permission to do a production Menotti's NBC opera *The Labyrinth*, an opera that was aired on television in 1963. It has never been performed after the performance for television, and much of the reason is that there is no rehearsal score that was adapted from his full score. When rehearsing operas or musicals, you will have a score that is a reduction of the full score enabling a pianist to play for the staging rehearsals with the actors. It is both inefficient in time and costs to have an orchestra be present at the actor/singer rehearsals, as it usually takes 3 weeks of rehearsals to be able to stage a full opera/musical, while orchestra musicians only need 2 or 3 rehearsals with the music to be able to perform it. The singers and actors take longer due to blocking, choreography, sets, costumes, acting, and other things dealt with when on stage. I wanted to focus on this score so that our students were able to perform this work(a world premiere) in the Spring of 2020.

Results of the Sabbatical

1.

I was able to earn 9 credits in doctoral courses for Public Policy, Legal Aspects in Education, and School-Community Relations. I continue to work on my doctorate degree and expect to be finished before I am eligible for my next sabbatical.

2.

The students performed a world premiere of Menotti's *Labyrinth*, despite the pandemic shutting down our in-person rehearsals in March of 2020. Examples of the full score that was then adapted to a rehearsal score is:

FULL SCORE:

The Labyrinth
giancarlo menotti

THE LABYRINTH

Gian Carlo Menotti

Allegro moderato

Flute
Oboe
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon
1st and 2nd Horns
Trumpet
Trombone
Percussion
Piano
1st Violin
2nd Violin
Viola
Cello
Bass

Allegro molto

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The Labyrinth
giancarlo menotti

2

Flute
Oboe
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon
1st and 2nd Horns
Trumpet
Trombone
Percussion
Piano
1st Violin
2nd Violin
Viola
Cello
Bass

The Labyrinth
giancarlo menotti

3

Flute
Oboe
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon
1st and 2nd Horns
Trumpet
Trombone
Percussion
Piano
1st Violin
2nd Violin
Viola
Cello
Bass

Piano Vocal Score Adaption:

THE LABYRINTH

GIAN CARLO MENOTTI

Allegro moderato

f *mp* *pp* *f* *p*

①

Andante

②

Bride
5 Look, my dear. Look a-gain. In your waistcoat? In your

Groom
Nothing.

The entire production can be viewed on YouTube at this link: <https://youtu.be/uVCBovmCCI4>

I also mentioned in my proposal that this would allow the beginning of planning to a summer musical festival for our students, and we are now in our 4th year of the Schwab Summer Music Festival, which brings in students and faculty from all over the region. As the program has just begun, it has the potential to be a game changer for the Arts in this region.

Value of Sabbatical Project

The sabbatical allowed me re-envision my teaching to be a better teacher for our students through my doctoral coursework. Additionally, I was able to make partnerships with current composers by working on the Menotti opera score, and I will begin producing more of these compositions at Ventura College. The summer festival will continue to grow at VC, and I'm excited to infuse more ideas into that to help it continue to grow.

Again, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to grow as a teacher and artist; I know our students have benefitted from this opportunity afforded to me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Wilson". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brent Wilson
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Ventura College