

Research Proposal for the
Graduate Student Research and Professional Development Fund
The School of Graduate Studies
Western Illinois University
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Submitted by: XXXXX

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Title of Research: Inside and Out: Vivaldi, Opera, Oratorio, and the Venetian Ospedali

Amount Requested: \$195.00

Request:

I am requesting research funds in order to acquire specific research materials unobtainable on through interlibrary loan or other methods. These research materials are essential to my thesis “Inside and Out: Vivaldi, Opera, Oratorio, and the Venetian Ospedali.” Following my research, these materials will then be added to the Western Illinois Library collection.

Background:

My thesis focuses on music at the Venetian Ospedali which were social and welfare institutions whose existence spanned from the twelfth through eighteenth centuries. Their initial existence was as places for pilgrims to rest; then later, they evolved into charity institutions for the poor, sick, or orphaned. Over time, certain Ospedali, namely the Pietà, began to focus on teaching the foundlings and orphaned children, particularly girls and young women. An important part of the curriculum taught to the girls of the Ospedali was music instruction and in the late sixteenth century the board of governors had begun to hire well-known and talented musicians to teach. By 1670, the governors had initiated the practice of auditioning and searching for talented girls to fill their schools and participate in the *figlie di coro* and allowing its privileged members to accept and teach fee-paying girls from outside of the Ospedali. My research is focused during these peak music-school years of the early eighteenth century at the Pietà. It is my belief that, by examining the music of the time, the music performed by the women, and the music written for the Ospedali, we gain insights into the influence of the music in and beyond the Pietà.

Examining the music of the Pietà, particularly works by Vivaldi (a central figure in the discourse of the Ospedali) offers insights to the ability and quality of the performers and also leads to an interesting discussion of codes of acceptable behavior and expectation in the Ospedali. It is my belief that Vivaldi’s oratorio *Juditha Triumphans* (1716) reveals important role models for the women and accepted aesthetic concepts of the time can be discovered. As a necessary part of fully understanding Vivaldi’s oratorio and its place in the Judith discourse, I am studying the two versions of Scarlatti’s *Giuditta* (composed approximately three decades

earlier), to gain an understanding of the conventions and derive deeper meaning from Vivaldi's stylistic choices.

To better understand how Vivaldi composed for female performers within the Pietà, it necessary to analyze the operatic works he composed outside for local theaters in other towns. Of his various operas, the aesthetics of Vivaldi's *Griselda* creates the most interesting questions and connections when juxtaposed with those of *Juditha Triumphans*. Both the Arcadian topic and its uses as a role-model for women in society-as well as the implications associated with the part writing for Vivaldi's highly favored leading-lady Anna Girroró provide a fascinating juxtaposition that both vocal dramatic works could have been written by the same composer for similar patrons.

Methodology:

My previous research has focused on the history of the Ospedali, understanding the organization and structure, and gaining an understanding of its place in Italian Baroque society. My current and future research is the examination of Vivaldi's life and career and of his works *Griselda* and *Juditha Triumphans*, as well as the nearest vocal dramatic works on the same topic: two versions of Scarlatti's *Giuditta* and his version of *Griselda* and *Griselda* by Buononcini. By studying the historical and moral implications of all versions of both *Juditha Triumphans* and *Griselda*, I have a deeper and more thorough understanding of the overall discourse of the works.

Budget:

I plan to use the requested sum to purchase scores and recordings of the aforementioned works and also the most recent comprehensive scholarly work on Vivaldi. While some materials may be ordered through inter-library loan, newly released books, scores and recordings are particularly difficult to acquire: less common scores are often out of the I-share consortium and recordings almost never circulate between libraries. While having the recordings with translated texts and scores would facilitate my research, it will also benefit the school when it is added to the music library's collection.

Scores:

Juditha Triumphans: Devicta Holofernis Barbarie RV 644 - 39.95+ 3.99 Shipping= \$44.00

Recordings:

Music from the Venetian Ospedali. San Francisco, CA: The Chorus- \$15.00

La Giuditta by Alessandro Scarlatti, Straussborg: The parliament de Musique- \$20.00

Griselda by Antonio Vivaldi, Ensemble Matheus- \$26.00

Books:

The Vivaldi Compendium by Michael Talbot, 2011. **ISBN-13:** 978-1843836704 \$90.00

