An original composition, "...And It Was Good For Orchestra" and a new century, a new audience: concert music's evolution into pop and the music producer as maestro

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AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION, "...AND IT WAS GOOD FOR ORCHESTRA"
AND
A NEW CENTURY, A NEW AUDIENCE: CONCERT MUSIC'S EVOLUTION INTO POP AND THE
MUSIC PRODUCER AS MAESTRO

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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in

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by
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ ii

LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................................. v

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................... vi

PART I. AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION, "...AND IT WAS GOOD FOR ORCHESTRA" ............... 1

   INSTRUMENTATION AND PROGRAM NOTES ..................................................................... 1
   Instrumentation and Performance Notes ............................................................................. 1
   Program Notes ................................................................................................................. 1

MUSICAL SCORE, "...AND IT WAS GOOD FOR ORCHESTRA" ............................................. 4

PART II. A NEW CENTURY, A NEW AUDIENCE: CONCERT MUSIC'S EVOLUTION INTO POP AND THE MUSIC PRODUCER AS MAESTRO .................................................................................. 113

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................................... 113

2 DAVID FOSTER ...................................................................................................................... 118
   Constructing a Style .......................................................................................................... 118
   Producing Records ......................................................................................................... 124
   Power Ballads ................................................................................................................. 127
   Electronic Composition .................................................................................................. 132
   Courting and Promoting New Talent ............................................................................ 137
   Producing and Philanthropy ............................................................................................. 141

3 APPROPRIATION IN CLASSICAL CROSSOVER MUSIC ...................................................... 145
   The Italian Period ........................................................................................................... 145
   Cultural Appropriation .................................................................................................... 147
   Instilling New Context ..................................................................................................... 148
   From Aria to Power Ballad ............................................................................................. 150
   The Entrepreneur ............................................................................................................ 152

4 ARRANGING A BESTSELLING SONG .............................................................................. 155
   Recycling the Popular Song ............................................................................................ 155
   Overdubbing the Past into the Present ............................................................................ 157
   Nobody Does It Alone .................................................................................................... 159

5 CONCLUSION ....................................................................................................................... 164
   The Value in David Foster's Style .................................................................................... 164
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Power Ballad Structure in Chicago's "Hard to Say I'm Sorry/Get Away" .......................... 129
2. Power Ballad Structure in Jackie Evancho's "To Believe" .............................................. 131
3. Opening melody from "The Love Theme from St. Elmo’s Fire" ....................................... 135
4. Opening Bass Structure from "The Love Theme from St. Elmo’s Fire" .............................. 136
5. Melody from the B Section of "The Love Theme from St. Elmo’s Fire" ............................. 136
6. Ballad Structure in Linda Ronstadt's "I Will Always Love You" ...................................... 160
7. Power Ballad Structure in Whitney Houston’s "I Will Always Love You" .......................... 162
ABSTRACT

The first part of this dissertation is a musical composition for full orchestra titled, ...

...And It Was Good. The work’s title refers to the biblical text that follows each day of God's
creation, "God saw all that he had made, and it was good." The architecture for the single
movement work is framed within seven sections, each representing a different day of the
biblical creation story. An arch form is used and each section is marked by a different tonal
center taken from a whole tone scale beginning on F. The composer employs several songs
from various world religions and manipulates them to form new melodies and rhythmic
motives throughout the work.

The second part of this dissertation is an account of the career of the pop music
producer, David Foster. Throughout his expansive career, David Foster has made
significant contributions to the pop music canon, specifically within the "power ballad"
form and within the genre of "classical crossover." Classical crossover music fuses
important elements of popular music’s form and sentimentality with serious concert
music’s romantic lyricism and orchestration. This new hybrid genre has proven
remarkably successful within the music industry and the pivotal role of David Foster
cannot be understated.

As a record producer, songwriter, and arranger, David Foster has reintroduced
music from the past, applying new layers of context to many older works. His
appropriation of preexisting songs into the more modern pop genre has produced new
works of pop art that feature fresh layers of context.
PART I
AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION, "...AND IT WAS GOOD FOR ORCHESTRA"

INSTRUMENTATION AND PROGRAM NOTES

Instrumentation and Performance Notes

3 Flutes (Flute 1 doubling on Piccolo)
  2 Oboes
  2 Clarinets
  2 Bassoons
  4 Horns in F
  2 Trumpets in C
  2 Trombones
    Tuba
    Timpani
3 Percussion: Bass Drum, Chimes, Claves, Glockenspiel, Marimba, Snare Drum,
Suspension Cymbal, Taiko Drum, Tam-Tam, 4 Tom-Toms, Vibraphone
  Harp
  Piano
  Violin I
  Violin II
  Viola
  Violoncello
  Bass

Trumpets and Horns should use a straight mute where indicated.

Double Basses are notated at their octave transposition.

Program Notes

Many of the world’s major religions contain, within their traditions, an explanation
or allegorical tale that depicts the origins of the universe, the creation of planet earth, and
the genesis of humanity. Within the Abrahamic religions, including Christianity, Judaism,
and Islam, the origins of the universe are recounted in a similar narrative fashion. The
Hindu belief system offers a circular story of creation, where God offers no beginning and
no end, One who creates as He destroys in an everlasting cycle. The public debate on
Creationism verses Science sparked the composer’s desire to create a symphonic work in which many theologies and viewpoints are combined in a large musical exploration of our universe’s creation. The work’s title refers to the Biblical text that follows each day of God’s creation, "God saw all that He had made, and it was good."

In addition to the various colorful scenarios of our origins, many of the world’s religions offer musical accompaniment to these narratives as well as songs of musical praise for God’s wondrous creations. The melodic themes and rhythmic motifs within this orchestral work originate from manipulated forms of various religious melodies and rhythms. These musical quotations were chosen through the composer’s interviews with numerous individuals of differing religious beliefs.

The architecture of this work is centered within the seven-day creation story, as depicted in the Bible’s Book of Genesis. The single movement work is organized using seven tonal centers, beginning with F and ascending by whole step with each passing day. In an effort to represent the Hindu belief in a circular creation, the piece will ascend through each pitch of the whole tone scale, returning to F for the seventh day. The biblical creation program also determines where the transformed melodies appear within the work. Numerology determines some of the rhythmic and harmonic elements within the piece, specifically a treatment of the numbers three, five, and seven.

1. Let There Be Light

The opening section uses a manipulated version of the Buddhist song "Forever Sensei," whose words pay reverence to the sun, the "morning star." This coincides with the programmatic moment of the sun’s birth. The "Nasadiya Sukta," a Hindu prayer of creation, is also employed to express the emptiness that preceded all that is known.
2. Let There Be Water

Fragments of the "Hatikvah," the National Anthem of Israel, are employed, although they often appear in a major modality instead of the traditional minor modality. Bitonal elements symbolize the duality realized with the separation of the sea from the sky.

3. Let There Be Land

The Christian hymns, "How Great Thou Art" and "All Creatures of Our God and King," are layered in a canonic-like fashion with polytonal treatments adding color. The Catholic hymn "Hail Holy Queen" and the "Catholic Eucharistic Doxology" are quoted, and are more fully manipulated in the latter sections.

4. Let There Be Time

Featuring a fragmented version of the "Eucharistic Doxology," the ethereal middle section lies within B♭, a tri-tone from the opening and closing sections of the piece. Although the Biblical story uses the fourth day to describe God's creation of the sun, moon, and stars, the composer shows that these creations help humanity understand time, the composer's pallet on which he paints. The African American spiritual, "Over My Head," is fragmented, symbolizing the music of the spheres that moves above us.

5/6. Let There Be Animals & Humans

Sections five and six are glued with motivic material to express that animals and humanity are descended from each other, these inner sections are distinguished through their tonal centers, D♭ for the animals and E♭ for humanity.

7. Let There Be Rest

The return of the opening material in this final section serves to demonstrate the circular nature of creation realized in the Hindu tradition.
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PART II

A NEW CENTURY, A NEW AUDIENCE: CONCERT MUSIC’S EVOLUTION INTO POP AND THE MUSIC PRODUCER AS MAESTRO

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In November of 1992, an updated arrangement of a country song, originally written in 1973, swept the global music market and became one of the best-selling commercial pop singles of all time. The song was "I Will Always Love You," written by the country music songwriter and performer, Dolly Parton.1 The record-breaking 1992 cover of "I Will Always Love You" was recorded by the popular American rhythm and blues vocal artist, Whitney Houston, for her film, The Bodyguard.2 Yet, Whitney Houston was only partially responsible for success of "I Will Always Love You." The R & B singer served as an instrument, molded by music industry executives, to deliver a product that encompassed much more than a musical performance. While it is true that Houston added her unique vocal style and a layer of emotional depth to song, the record producer David Foster added many additional notable features, including the musical arrangement.3

The success of "I Will Always Love You" launched David Foster's already thriving music career to new heights, and Foster's work within music production became an avenue for his unique artistic expression. Combining his talent for arranging with his distinct

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2 Whitney Houston's career in popular music began in 1983 and spanned nearly three decades until her death in 2012. "I Will Always Love You" became the greatest selling recorded single by a female vocalist.

musical tastes, David Foster's music arrangements and compositions have added a new artistic dimension to pop music's canon, and have helped to define the parameters of the emerging genre of commercial pop known as classical crossover music.

From his early musical work, playing in wedding bands and touring with pop musicians, David Foster was immersed in popular music resources and artistic influences that he would eventually unite into his own musical aesthetic. These influences materialized in his award-winning pop arrangements for numerous singers and instrumentalists, as well as in his own songs and instrumental compositions. Many of these commercially successful songs have involved acts of artistic appropriation, taking aspects of existing pieces of music, such as melodies or even other musicians’ vocal tracks, and incorporating them into his own products.

Appropriation has been one of the defining elements in many 20th century artists' aesthetics, and is often described as an essential feature of the postmodern condition. From the American pop artists of the 1960s to avant-garde American photographers in the 1980s, visual artists used appropriated images to hold a mirror up to an overpowering consumer culture. Art music also witnessed new forms of musical appropriation with the advent of electronic music. Magnetic tape allowed composers to record everyday sounds and incorporate them into new musical compositions. By the end of the 20th century, digital processes had changed the way composers and musicians captured and shared their

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4 Susan McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 140. In her musings regarding the Postmodern condition, Susan McClary comments on the use of recycled elements and pastiche as part of this artistic movement.
music. These advances also allowed composers and music producers to alter the musical recordings of the past, thereby creating new works for their modern audiences.

One of pop music’s defining features is its reliance on appropriation. For instance, Simon Frith, a leading academic writer on popular music, recognizes that the forms of rock and roll music from the second half of the twentieth century are constructed from the appropriation of African American musical forms, which are additionally subdivided into pop music’s many subgenres. Form, however, is only one of many musical components that can be appropriated within a pop song. Cultural practices, historic idioms, and performance styles are also often fused into one postmodern pastiche. The industry-based genre of music known as classical crossover is a variant of pop that utilizes this form of musical borrowing.

Many pop musicians have borrowed direct quotations from other musicians’ compositions, appropriating them into their own creations by changing the context of the original idea, and have created entirely new artistic statements or aesthetics. David Foster recognizes his and his contemporaries’ consistent use of musical borrowing, stating, "when you think about it, there are only twelve notes and it’s all been done before. We’re just stealing and borrowing from all of those who have gone before us. There’s nothing new as far as those twelve note configurations." Performers also use their own image and personal histories to add new dimensions to preexisting songs. Often, the music industry harnesses the commercial appeal of a specific pop song, continuously recycling it through

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5 Mark Katz, Capturing Sound: How Technology has Changed Music (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 138.
7 David Foster, interview by author, February 13, 2013.
different performers, arrangements, and interpretations, thereby constructing entirely new contexts for the music.

On a grander scale, David Foster’s work as an artistic producer articulates a pastiche of, not only musical styles, but also entire art forms. His final creation, the pop star celebrity, is the result of the appropriation of the many art forms into a blended whole. Uniting elements of poetry, fashion, performance, and musical styles, today’s music producer must transform ordinary musicians into commercial icons. The most successful producers are highly sensitive to popular culture and must therefore be able to construct performing artists with whom consumers will want to identify. David Foster has navigated the waters of pop simulacra with great commercial success, and the history of the classical crossover genre of pop music is articulated within his story.

This paper reveals David Foster’s successful rise through commercial music production, and the unique avenues and opportunities awarded to the producer. Foster’s musical biography, highlighted in the second chapter, traces his beginnings as a Canadian piano student, through his rise to international fame as a music producer. Foster’s use of musical appropriation in the production studio reveals fresh layers of context within recycled classical repertoire. This infusion of musical style has solidified Foster’s name as the leading producer of the classical crossover genre of music, the industry division of pop music that is explored throughout the third chapter. Inspired by the lyricism of Italian opera, Foster has created new works, reimagined from the arias of Puccini, and consequently ensured classical crossover’s reign over the worldwide popular music charts. This theme continues into the fourth chapter, where Foster’s production style is examined in his musical arrangements and compositions of lighter pop songs. Through each of these
endeavors, David Foster found a unique style of musical expression using artistic appropriation. However, critics of pop music question whether these expressions should be valued as artistic statements or as entertaining merchandise produced by a successful craftsman.

Foster's story helps to articulate the more recent approaches to hit song production. The recording studio and soundboard are Foster's musical canvass, unlike the written scores that house the music of his classical contemporaries. The increased use of electronically produced instruments, paired with advances in recording capabilities, have given Foster the resources to join new sounds and textures to the great music of the past. It is within this electronic medium that Foster and his fellow producers have defined a new aesthetic.
CHAPTER 2

DAVID FOSTER

Constructing a Style

It is not easy to state the specific parameters that define what it takes to become a great music producer. The most successful producers of the twentieth century arose from diverse backgrounds, each ascending the ranks of the music industry through unique experiences. Therefore, each producer has made distinct contributions to their trade. David Foster's response to the frequently asked question, "what does it take to be a record producer," is always the same. The aspiring record producer must possess one essential quality, "an undying love of music." In order to understand David Foster's specific approach to music production, it is important to highlight events in his unique career and the numerous musical styles and personalities that influenced him.

David Walter Foster was immersed in music from a very young age. He was born on Vancouver Island, British Columbia on November 1st, 1949, and his parents enrolled him in classical piano lessons after learning that their son had perfect pitch. Foster studied classical piano technique for many years, which provided the foundation of his musical ability. His father also played the piano and it was from his hands that David learned many popular styles, including pop standards. Foster was also a member of his school band and his instructor encouraged him to try as many instruments as his interests permitted. In this classroom, the young musician acquired a basic understanding of clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and many other instruments, a skill that would serve him in his production career.

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8 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 81.
Although Foster became an accomplished pianist, classical music alone did not quench his musical appetite. Drawn to rock and blues music, Foster formed a dance band, The Starbright Combo, with whom he performed at weddings and other local events. He played keyboard for the group, booked the band’s performances, and managed their finances.\(^9\)

After receiving a scholarship for the University of Washington’s Summer Music Program, Foster immersed himself in instrumental jazz music at the suggestion of The Starbright Combo’s bassist, Rick Reynolds.\(^10\) When he joined another band called The Strangers, Foster dropped out of high school to briefly perform with the group in London.

By 1969, Foster had returned to Canada and relocated to Edmonton, Alberta to play piano for a popular jazz trio. During one performance, his pianistic style caught the attention of rock musician, Ronnie Hawkins, who asked Foster to join his band.\(^11\) In the company of pop vocalist B.J. Cook, who would eventually become his first wife, Foster moved to Toronto and began touring eastern Canada with Ronnie Hawkins’ band.\(^12\) After six months, however, Hawkins fired him, believing that Foster lacked the necessary stage presence for his group.\(^13\)

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\(^9\) Foster and Fenjves, *Hitman*, 35. Foster played keyboard for The Starbright Combo and organized the group’s financial and booking arrangements. This early exposure to music management may have been an important seminal step towards Foster’s eventual producing career.

\(^10\) Ibid., 63. In his biography, David Foster emphasizes the importance of Rick Reynolds jazz mentorship, stating that the exposure to jazz artists like Bill Evans and Vince Guaraldi were priceless.

\(^11\) In addition to his reputation as a rock performer, Ronnie Hawkins was known as a talent scout, promoting the artists who would eventually form the rock ensemble, The Band.

\(^12\) Ibid., 53. Victoria “BJ” Cook had been the vocalist for the rock band, Beaver Fever, before auditioning for Hawkins’ band at David Foster’s request.

\(^13\) Ibid., 56.
B.J. Cook left Hawkins' band with Foster. Along with several other former members of Hawkins' band, they formed their own group called Skylark. When Barry De Vorzon, a music industry-connected composer from Los Angeles, heard Skylark's song "Wildflower," written by the group's guitarist, Doug Edwards, and Foster's friend, Dave Richardson, he insisted on bringing the Canadian group to California where he promoted the song to music executives. In 1971, after meeting with numerous music executives, Skylark was signed to Capitol Records. "Wildflower" climbed to the top ten on the Billboard charts, and Foster's career within the music industry began.

The members of Skylark parted ways after their second album failed to meet expected sales and Foster and his new wife, B.J., decided to stay in Los Angeles. After learning that B.J. was pregnant, Foster found a job as an accompanist for theatre singers auditioning for Broadway-style productions. Throughout this experience, Foster was immersed in musical theatre repertoire and, although the show tune was not a genre that he particularly enjoyed, this exposure to the Broadway canon would eventually serve him as an arranger and producer.

Receiving a full time position as the pianist for the American premiere of The Rocky Horror Show, a successful British rock musical featuring themes of sexual freedom and transgender roles, Foster found himself giving music directions to the band at the Roxy Theatre in Los Angeles. The exposure he received from The Rocky Horror Show earned him an invitation to the Record Plant, one of two innovative recording studios in the United

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14 Barry De Vorzon composed many soundtracks in the 1970s and 1980s and was well known for his theme music to the television show The Young and the Restless, which won a Grammy award in 1977.
15 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 64.
States, known for their casual atmosphere and groundbreaking rock recordings. In the company of many legendary rock musicians, Foster became a regular face at the Record Plant. Foster began building his artistic network while playing keyboards and piano, and before long, his career as a studio session musician commenced.

It is not uncommon for record producers to begin their careers as session musicians. Many of the most well-known and successful producers built their artistic networks while performing within the recording studio. The keyboardist, Gary Wright’s, electronic album, *The Dream Weaver*, is among the many albums that feature Foster’s contributions. This work was significant to Foster because Wright introduced the young musician to the Moog synthesizer, and instrument that Foster would eventually feature in his own arrangements. In addition to his keyboard contributions to other artists’ studio recordings, Foster played jingles for commercials and background music for television shows. As the session work grew, Foster found himself making music arrangement suggestions for the recording artists. His network continued to grow when he received a telephone call from George Harrison, the lead guitarist of The Beatles. The guitarist flew Foster to London, where he contributed to several string arrangements for Harrison’s two albums, *Extra Texture* and *Thirty Three & 1/3*.

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17 Foster and Fenjves, *Hitman*, 67-71. Among the many musical personas Foster encountered at The Record Plant were John Lennon, Mick Jagger, and Van Morrison.

18 David Foster, interview by author, Pittsburgh, PA, March 15, 2013.

19 Following the breakup of The Beatles, George Harrison embarked upon numerous recorded solo projects. *Thirty Three & 1/3* was his first album to be released under his own record label, Dark Horse Records.
Noticing that many of the music producers he was working with did not speak in musical terms, Foster began to realize that his musical performance background could be advantageous and that music production might be an avenue that he could excel within. Foster's first production assignment was on the self-titled album of a female vocalist named Jaye P Morgan, which took him six months to complete. Although the album was a commercial failure, the young producer continued to receive production opportunities through his professional network, including collaborations with commercially successful pop artists such as Sony Bono and Alice Cooper.

Foster's creative production ideas were executed by a team of audio engineers who captured and manipulated the recorded sounds using Neve analogue mixing boards. Never finding any spare time to master audio engineering on his own, Foster continued to utilize various engineers throughout his career as a record producer. Stressing their importance in his process, Foster specified, "I always had engineers. Good ones. They are super important to a project... when we were mixing, it sometimes took four pairs of hands to make the moves cause you had to do it in a complete pass." Modern digital recording processes have since made the mixing process more efficient. Digital automation now allows engineers to continuously re-edit tracks until the desirable musical parameters are defined.

David Foster's dreams came true when Maurice White, the founder and lead singer of the wildly successful American soul band, Earth, Wind, & Fire, asked him to write for the

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20 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 80.
21 Ibid., 82-83. Sony Bono gave Foster production credit for his duet with vocalist, Cher, on "You're Not Right For Me." Foster contributed to the production of shock performer Alice Cooper's 1978 song "How You Gonna See Me Now?"
22 David Foster, interview by author, March 15, 2013.
group’s upcoming studio album. Through this experience, Foster revealed his songwriting process as highly steeped in piano improvisation and experimentation. His method involved him spontaneously performing on the piano while listening to Maurice White. Capturing the musical events with handheld tape recorder, the duo continued to improvise until they composed something that they connected with. An effective yet traditional form of composition, this improvisatory style, also known as "jamming," is one of the common methods used within the creation and performance of pop music. Unlike the traditional classical composer, whose compositions are much more contrived, the popular musician often improvises within basic formal parameters until a new song is created.

This improvisatory method is primary how Foster continued to write music throughout his career. Much has been written about the inspirational motivation driving classical composers’ and popular songwriters’ processes. In a 2013 interview, Foster described his own approach to music composition,

My process has always been that it is a job. The notion that you are looking at a sunset and you get inspired and you run to the piano, while I know that works for some people and I’ve heard of that working for some people, it’s never worked for me . . . If I know that I have to write a song for a movie or for an artist, or just because I haven’t written one in a while and I better get on it, I go to the piano and I play.

23 Maurice White founded Earth, Wind & Fire in 1969 with songwriters, Wade Flemons and Don Whitehead, under the name The Salty Peppers. After adding additional musicians, he changed the group’s name.


25 David Foster, interview by author, February 13, 2013.
This method worked well for Foster and White, as Earth, Wind & Fire’s ninth studio album, *I Am*, went on to sell millions of units, and Foster won his first Grammy Award for the album’s hit single, "After the Love Is Gone."  

### Producing Records

David Foster soon shifted his attention primarily toward music production, though he never abandoned songwriting and has continued to succeed as a popular songwriter. The fundamental responsibility of the commercial music producer is that he acts as an intermediary between the public's aesthetic desires and the artists he represents. However, the means by which the music producer achieves this varies greatly depending on the source. Some recognize specific divisions within the music production trade, such as the 'creative music producer,' the 'songwriting music producer,' or the 'technical music producer.' Others note that the most important task for the producer is to inspire great music, while diminishing any stress on the recording artists and record companies. Foster's role as a music producer traverses many avenues. He is what one might describe as an "all-in-one" music producer. Foster's responsibilities have included musical arranging, choosing repertoire, pursuing new artists, mentoring his artists, promoting artists to investors, working specific financial budgets, and developing concerts.

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26 Foster and Fenjes, *Hitman*, 86. In his biography, Foster states that the R&B version of this song was improvised at the suggestion of Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown Records.


An example that articulates David Foster's multiple roles under the "producer" title is his work with the American rock band, Chicago. When the members of the group considered Foster as producer for their 1982 album, Chicago 16, they were looking to redefine their image, and by the time Foster met with them, they already had most of the album's music written. After listening to their songs, however, Foster informed the group that he would only work with them if they abandoned their song choices and, with his help, compose a completely new album. In addition to his contribution to the songwriting and song selection processes, Foster also drastically redefined the group's sound. Placing less emphasis on their once well-known horn section, Foster suggested a more electronically inspired sound. The group’s new aesthetic would feature heavy electric guitars, an unabashed use of synthesized strings and keyboards, rock-groove driven drums, and strong chordal vocal harmonies. Gary Wright’s instruction on the Moog synthesizer, from years prior, proved useful to Foster as the producer also performed, among other instruments, Moog synthesizer bass for this new record. Foster also brought in additional session musicians to work with Chicago's core members.

Within the recording of this single album, one encounters a producer who selected the songs, co-wrote the music, rearranged the instrumental focus, and performed with the ensemble. In a process similar to choosing the orchestration for a composition, this producer also selects and arranges the layers of instruments that will define the ensemble's sound. These responsibilities served as additional contributions to the musical product, namely Chicago, the marketable band. Following the recording, the producer also oversaw

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29 The band, Chicago, was originally called The Chicago Transit Authority. The original group was comprised of Walter Parazaider, Terry Kath, Danny Seraphine, James Pankow, Lee Loughnane, Robert Lamm, and Peter Cetera. They were known for the strong use of horns within their pop arrangements.

30 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 96.
the musical editing and mastering of the album. If one considers the role of the classical music orchestra director, one notices parallel responsibilities. As the musical literature selections, concert themes, musician management, and overall sound lie within the judgment of the orchestral maestro, so too do these decisions hold true for the record producer, albeit within a different musical arena.

Commercially, Foster proved to be the right choice for Chicago. The group’s new album reached the top ten on the Billboard charts and their hit single, "Hard to Say I’m Sorry/Get Away," co-written by Foster, reached number one on the charts. The producer defended his stubborn approach to the album’s development, declaring, "I’ve always fought for my artistic vision . . . at the end of the day it’s about sticking to your creative vision . . . I always give 110%. When someone hires me as a producer, it’s my job to push him or her towards greatness . . . my goal is to get more out of artists then anyone else they’ve ever worked with." Within this statement, Foster articulates his specific role as a producer.

Foster joined Chicago for their succeeding albums, Chicago 17 and Chicago 18. Following a more drastic departure from the group’s earlier style, Foster placed David Cetera, Chicago’s bassist and vocalist, in the spotlight. The producer co-wrote some of the music, as he had for the previous album, and the success of the hit song, "You’re the Inspiration," contributed to Chicago 17’s achievement as the ensemble’s best-selling album. Foster was also awarded his third Grammy Award for his production and instrumental arrangement on the album’s single, "Hard Habit to Break."

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31 Joel Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top Pop Singles, 12th ed. (Menomonee Falls, WI: Record Research Inc., 2009), 188.
32 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 95.
33 Joel Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top Pop Singles, 188.
Though *Chicago 18* did not meet the critical success of *Chicago 16* or *Chicago 17*, the tracks that Foster produced for these albums solidified the producer's popular aesthetic. Foster's work on *Chicago 17* represented "The pinnacle of his craft," and defined a popular adult contemporary sound for nearly a decade. Foster also revealed a penchant for a particular structural form within many of the songs featured on Chicago's albums. It is a form that served him throughout his career, and that he would eventually master with great success.

**Power Ballads**

Upon analysis of the many commercial hit songs, written, arranged, or produced by David Foster, one observes similarities in their construction. These songs are composed within formal verse-chorus structures, and also share common stylistic standardization. The style, eventually coined as the "power ballad," became David Foster's signature musical format. The power ballad rose to pop culture prominence in the 1970s in the music of the American singer-songwriter, Barry Manilow. Bands such as Queen and Kiss performed rock ballads in the 1970s, and although they were stylistically similar to the power ballad, these rock ballads did not always follow the standardized structure that was eventually recognized within power ballads.

David Metzer, a professor of music at the University of British Columbia, has recognized that power ballads surfaced within three variations of 20th century popular

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styles, rock ballads, R&B ballads, and hip-hop ballads. Noting the essential distinction of the power ballad, Metzer writes, "the crux of the musical formula is continual escalation."\(^{36}\)

Traditional ballads use a slow tempo to express sentiment. The power ballad also uses slow sentimental verse, however, it is expressed with a gradual build of musical excitement. The typical power ballad begins with a reflective, acoustic instrumental introduction. Often framed within a verse-chorus structure, the power ballad gradually builds in musical density, adding layer upon layer of instrumentation. This continuous climbing crashes into the climax of the song, marked by a "wrenching modulation up a step."\(^{37}\) Therefore, the power ballad's tonal blueprint is defined by a large gradual progression up a major second. The singer also employs the power ballad's stylistic standardization, singing emotionally exaggerated lyrics and releasing the highest pitches of the vocal line during the song's climax.\(^{38}\)

David Foster's arrangements for many of Chicago's songs illustrate this power ballad structure, yet some of these songs employ interesting variations that set them apart from other power ballads. In "Hard to Say I'm Sorry/Get Away," a solo piano, lightly supported by low synthesized string textures, performs a short introduction in E major. Both textures continue through the first verse, yet the synthesized string texture become more dense until full strings, extended upward in range, join the instrumentation in the chorus. Heavy percussion and Moog bass arrive in the second verse. Horns join the texture before the verse ends. The second chorus features much thicker instrumental textures. Bombastic horns and electric guitars deliver the necessary modulation, up a minor 3rd


instead of the standard major 2nd. The chorus is repeated, leading to a section of rock guitar solos interwoven with high symphonic strings. Dying away into piano and strings, the music temporarily moves toward release, returning to E major. At the point where most power ballads would conclude, this hit song embarks on a new direction. The musical texture begins to build again, reunited with electric guitars and forte percussion. Finally modulating up the necessary whole step to G♭, the song continues with a beat-driven coda, subtitled "Get Away." All of the instrumental textures are reunited and, led by the horns, ascend into obscurity (figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>TONIC KEY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MAIN INSTRUMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>0:00 - 0:20</td>
<td>Piano, Low Synth Strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 1</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>0:21 - 0:46</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Chorus/Bridge</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>0:47 - 0:59</td>
<td>Piano, Light Strings, Bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus/Hook</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>1:00 - 1:29</td>
<td>Piano, Full Strings, Bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 2</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>1:30 - 1:56</td>
<td>Piano, Strings, Strong Bass, Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Chorus/Bridge 1</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>1:57 - 2:09</td>
<td>Piano, Strings, Bass, Percussion, Keyboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Chorus/Bridge 2</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>2:10 - 2:22</td>
<td>Piano, Strings, Bass, Percussion, Keyboard, Horns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus/Hook</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>2:23 - 2:49</td>
<td>Piano, Strings, Bass, Percussion, Keyboard, Horns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus/Hook Instrumental Solo</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>2:50 - 3:16</td>
<td>Piano, High Orchestral Strings, Heavy Bass, Percussion, Keyboard, Strong Horns, Electric Guitars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Outro to &quot;Hard to Say I'm Sorry&quot;</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>3:17 - 3:32</td>
<td>Full Instrumental Texture Gradually Diminishing to Piano and Strings Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Transition into &quot;Get Away&quot;</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>3:33 - 4:03</td>
<td>Gradually Incorporate Instrumental Textures Back Into the Transition, Add Heavy Percussion, and Accelerando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda/&quot;Get Away&quot;</td>
<td>G♭ Major</td>
<td>4:04 - 5:06</td>
<td>Continued Layering of Texture, Rock Guitar, Strong Horn Solos Colored with Blue Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Power Ballad Structure in Chicago's "Hard to Say I'm Sorry/Get Away."39

Foster used a unique approach to the power ballad structure with "Hard to Say I'm Sorry/Get Away." His arrangement temporarily breaks the rules by arriving at a climactic plateau, not through an ascending whole step modulation, but with an ascending minor 3rd modulation. However, this transgression is corrected in the song's dynamic coda, where the tonality briefly modulates back to E major before the final modulation up a whole step to G♭. "Hard to Say I'm Sorry/Get Away" begins in E major and ends in G♭ major. Although arrived at by unconventional means, the necessary overarching tonal movement up a major second is completed.

A more traditional example of the power ballad formula is evident in Foster's arrangement of the 2011 single, "To Believe," recorded by the child soprano, Jackie Evancho, for her official debut album, Dream With Me. As the instrumental and tonal outline for "To Believe" reveals, Foster relies on carefully layered instrumental track additions to increase the song's power (figure 2). Following a dramatic caesura, Foster repeats the final chorus, modulated up a whole step. This yields the song's musical climax, the pinnacle of Foster's ever-rising musical arch. Without this internal musical layering, the listener is left with a typical undecorated song structure.

40 Jackie Evancho rose to classical crossover music fame after her appearance on the television talent program, America's Got Talent. "To Believe" was written by her uncle and the author of this document, Matthew Evancho, and was arranged and produced by David Foster.
Figure 2. Power Ballad Structure in Jackie Evancho's "To Believe."\(^{41}\)

According to Foster, his specific style of music production, which he began using in the 1980s and continues to use up to the present day, may have steered popular music in a new direction, saying,

I think that pop music would sound slightly different today if I hadn't been born. I think I really created a sound in the eighties that propelled the power ballad, or whatever you want to call it. I was responsible or at least partially responsible for that sound... I think I altered the course of music slightly."\(^{42}\)

Additional sources agree that Foster's music arrangements for pop artists have contributed to the power ballad style.\(^{43}\) Yet, his success during that decade was not limited to his power ballads or even his collaborations with pop artists. Foster also received

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\(^{42}\) David Foster, interview by author, Pittsburgh, PA, February 13, 2013.

accolades for his work on the Broadway musical album, *Dreamgirls*, and on numerous film soundtracks including *Ghostbusters, Footloose, Pretty Woman*, and *St. Elmo's Fire.*

The 1980s also provided tremendous changes within David Foster's personal life. After separating from B.J. Cook, Foster remarried a woman named Rebecca Dyer. Together, the couple had three daughters, but Foster's work life often overshadowed his personal life keeping him from his daughters and from Rebecca. After engaging in an affair with the songwriter, Linda Thompson, Foster separated from Rebecca.

**Electronic Composition**

By 1985, David Foster was established as a reputable producer and arranger, and his particular composition aesthetic had caught the attention of renowned actress and vocal artist, Barbra Streisand. Requesting that this aesthetic be featured on her project, *The Broadway Album*, Streisand hired Foster to arrange and produce Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim’s show tune, "Somewhere," from the musical, *West Side Story*.

Providing artistic direction to her producer, Streisand informed Foster that she wanted the musical arrangement for "Somewhere" to sound otherworldly. Accepting her artistic commission, Foster and his chief engineer, Umberto Gatica, began the month-long process of arranging and producing "Somewhere."

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44 Foster and Fenjves, *Hitman*, 103. Foster received his second Grammy Award for his work on the *Dreamgirls: The Original Cast Album*, and was nominated for a Grammy for his work on the *Ghostbusters* movie soundtrack.

45 Foster and Fenjves, *Hitman*, 12. Linda Thompson contributed to many of Foster's songs throughout their relationship, including the Josh Groban single, "To Where You Are," and Whitney Houston's single, "I Have Nothing."

46 Foster and Fenjves, *Hitman*, 74. Foster had also previously worked with Barbra Streisand as a session musician.

47 Following the success of Bernstein's musical, *West Side Story*, its show tune, "Somewhere," became somewhat of a popular standard on its own and has been interpreted by various musicians produced by Foster.
In addition to Foster’s management and artistic direction within the recording studio, which included the oversight of his engineer and seven music programmers, Foster also had to shape the accompaniment for "Somewhere" into a recorded terrain on which Streisand would layer her own vocal styling. He decided upon a strictly synthesized canvas, with the exception of the vocal track, to represent the otherworldly quality that Streisand desired. Recalling this experience, Foster explained, "Barbra said to me that she wanted it to sound like it was not created on this planet so that's what we did, no orchestra, just synths."48 After recording Streisand’s vocal track, Foster and his programmers could manipulate the vocal track creating additional variations and colors. Through this layering of synthesized music, Foster joined the company of many 20th century electronic composers whose experiments in electronic soundscapes colored the pallet of modern concert music.

Foster’s finished product features the same gradual layering of textures as many of his earlier arrangements, with the omission of the climatic modulation. The synthesized introduction, composed of glistening arpeggios, sweeping wind textures, and synthesized horns, is complimented with electronically manipulated fragments of the song’s chorus, taken from Streisand’s vocal tracks. The first verse features Streisand’s vocal track accompanied by synthesized keyboard and strings. A light echoing beat is created as synthetic bass is layered into the second verse, joined by windy electronic textures midway through the phrase. A steady drum loop is revealed when Streisand sings the chorus, which, in the third verse, continues to build in intensity when joined by synthetic horns.

48 David Foster, interview by author, March 15, 2013.
The music culminates with Streisand's grandiose statement, "somehow, someday, somewhere!" 49

Most striking about Foster's musical arrangement of "Somewhere" is the opening minute of freeform textures. Foster paints his introduction with floating dyads, taken from the chorus' major second motif that sounds with each expression of "somewhere." It has been noted that one defining separation between electronic art music and electronic popular music lies within the presence of repetitive rhythms. 50 If one follows this reasoning, Foster's synthesized introduction has much more in common with avant-garde art music than with the Broadway show tune. Evaluated as a whole work within the context of the 1985 music scene, the aesthetic of Streisand's "Somewhere" lies between pop music and art music. Though notable, Foster was not the first pop musician to blur the lines between these two distinctions. Foster's mentor, Gary Wright, used the same stylistic effects with his synthesized introduction to, "Dream Weaver," recorded ten years before The Broadway Album. Regardless of these observations, one still designates a pop distinction to "Somewhere" due to the song's overall form and its commercial context.

The Broadway Album was a commercial and critical success. 51 David Foster received his fifth Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocalist/Best Background Arrangement, and Streisand received a Grammy Award for Best Female Pop

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51 Joel Whitburn, Joel Whitburn's Top Pop Singles, 944.
Vocal Performance. Remaining close friends, Streisand and Foster would eventually reunite in 1993 for the singer's moderately successful *Back to Broadway* album.

The same year that "Somewhere" adorned the Billboard charts, Foster's electronically infused instrumental love theme for the film, *St. Elmo's Fire*, became a pop music sensation. Similar to "Somewhere," the "Love Theme from St. Elmo's Fire" relied on heavy synthesized instrumental tracks. However, unlike the introductory material in Streisand's song, Foster's "Love Theme" never ventures outside the walls of popular kitsch. A steady pulse, in the form a strict ostinato in the strings, drives the music through to completion.

To many listeners, the mostly synthesized instrumental recording might seem like a 'classical' work. This may be the result of the inexperienced listener's assumption that any instrumental composition lacking lyrics falls within the genre of 'classical music.' However, the "Love Theme's" simple form and melodic dependence prove that it has more in common with popular songs than with any classical form. Like most popular songs, Foster's "Love Theme" relies on varying degrees of repetition within a simple melodic phrase (figure 3).

![Figure 3. Opening melody from "The Love Theme from St. Elmo's Fire."

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This melodic phrase is stated twice over an Alberti bass styled ostinato that falls within two chords, the tonic and the dominant, while rhythmically progressing through a simple syncopation (figure 4). Melodic repetition continues within the shorter fragments of the B section (figure 5).

![Figure 4. Opening Bass Structure from "The Love Theme from St. Elmo's Fire."](image)

![Figure 5. Melody from the B Section of "The Love Theme from St. Elmo's Fire."](image)

Similar to the opening material, these new melodic phrases are also stated twice, with a slight variation at the closing of the repeated phrase. Although the underlying harmonic progression of this B section provides a small amount of variety, the repetition, realized through a sequenced ascending scale, reinforces the overall simplicity of the work. Yet, the allure of Foster's "Love Theme" may lie within this inherent simplicity. Framed within an AABB' form, Foster's melody, like many popular tunes, relies heavily on one of the most basic of western music's devices, the major scale. The B section alone is

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55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
constructed from a sequence of ascending whole steps and half steps, while the song’s most interesting melodic contour is expressed in the theme’s opening seven pitches.

Courting and Promoting New Talent

Though songwriting and studio production are the more prominent features of David Foster’s production career, it is important to also highlight the various enterprises in commercial business that are encased in Foster’s "producer" title. Artists and Repertoire (A&R) is a division within a recording company that finds new musical talent for the record label and often nurtures the artistic development of its clients. The A&R representative may also aid with an artist’s song selection and in finding appropriate songwriters with whom their artists will collaborate. David Foster is not often introduced to new artists through A&R representatives, as theirs’ is a task he frequently accomplishes on his own. Foster is, essentially, an A&R representative, yet he admits that he relies on the talents of his sister and his friend Jay Landers, who are also A&R representatives. Foster explained, "I need them to help me find songs, and to really walk the project all the way through to the end, and then some. People think that when the album is done, my job is done, but there's much more to do after that, helping put a band together, styling, image, TV shows, tours, events, anything we can do to exploit the product."57 Through Foster’s immense network within the music industry, including his family and friends, the producer is introduced to many of his artists with whom he collaborates.

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57 David Foster, interview by author, March 13, 2013. Jay Landers is an A&R representative with the Universal Music Group.
The Canadian pop star, Celine Dion, is one of these artists. Foster first heard the voice of the young female singer on a video recording given to him by a friend. Believing that he had heard the "best voice on the planet," Foster embarked on a successful campaign to meet and court the young artist. Dion’s 1990 American debut album, *Unison*, featured the song "Love By Another Nature," with a production and writing credit to David Foster. However, Foster’s relationship as producer for the rising Canadian singer extended far beyond the recording studio.

By the time Foster was building an artistic relationship with Celine Dion, he had become somewhat of a philanthropist. Using his strong celebrity network, Foster had begun organizing charity events and arranging various performances featuring many high-profile names within the popular music industry. As Dion’s name was gaining recognition, Foster decided to use these events and his network to promote the young artist. As a featured performer at Foster's private concerts, Dion’s own network began to grow, and when Foster was asked to organize the entertainment for a tribute to Prince Charles and Princess Diana, he asked Celine Dion to sing as the featured performer.

Foster’s relationship with Dion continued through her ascent to American celebrity. In addition to her American debut album, Foster was given producer credits on her 1993 release, *The Color of My Love*, and her 1996 album, *Falling Into You*. Dion also appeared in fundraisers and televised events organized by her producer. Through their professional relationship, Dion collaborated with many other performers within David Foster’s network, including Barbra Streisand, with whom Dion recorded the hit single "Tell Him," a vocal duet

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co-written by Foster. Dion also collaborated on "The Prayer," another vocal duet co-written and produced by Foster. "The Prayer" was first recorded by Dion and the Italian tenor, Andrea Bocelli, and was subsequently released as a duet featuring Dion and Josh Groban.60

Groban is another talent who was promoted and mentored by Foster, following their introduction in 1998. Recognizing the appeal of Groban's voice, Foster began to build a network for the young singer and work on Groban's commercial image.61 Asking Groban to substitute for Bocelli during rehearsals for his and Celine Dion's Academy Award and Grammy Award performances of "The Prayer," Foster began to establish Groban's audience, making sure that he was performing in front of other influential personalities. The producer also began to feature Groban's talent at various events when he was asked to coordinate the entertainment. After Foster arranged a meeting between Groban and the influential screenwriter and television producer, David E. Kelley, Groban earned a guest spot on Kelley's popular American television show, Ally McBeal.62 Following his performances of "You're Still You" and "To Where You Are" on Ally McBeal, Josh Groban became an international celebrity.

David Foster produced Josh Groban's first two albums, the self-titled album, Josh Groban, and Closer. He also co-produced Groban's third album, Awake. Yet, like his relationship with Celine Dion, Foster's experience with Josh Groban demonstrated that the

61 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 159.
role of "producer" extends beyond the recording of a studio album. The music producer is responsible for the creation of a commercial product, and that product is the pop celebrity. The recorded album is only one of the many instruments that will transform a performer into a marketable product. Once a single or a studio album is released to the public, consumers can purchase and own a portion of that artist, thereby placing their own meaning and value on the product’s worth. David Foster acted as an intermediary between Josh Groban and consumers of his music. Confirming his title as an "all in one" producer, Foster elaborated, "I arranged the album, I picked the songs, and I pretty much made him do what I wanted him to do."63 He helped to direct the image, the music, the language, and the performances. In doing so, he transformed the concept of Josh Groban, unifying his image and his music into one international franchise.

Foster has overseen the development of an artistic aesthetic, the mentorship, the promotion, and the professional networking of numerous pop musicians. He has fashioned images and created illusory narratives to accompany his artists’ music. He has arranged and promoted significant amounts of performances and musical spectacles. His oversight of countless events has brought together many of the top ranking names in popular music. Through these examples, one recognizes Foster as the modern commercial impresario. The musical and artistic collaborations that he designs are unified under a singular but massively profitable umbrella.

Another artist to fall under David Foster’s mentorship is the Canadian crooner, Michael Bublé. Foster first heard the young entertainer in 2000, at a wedding of the daughter of the Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, where Bublé was providing the

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63 David Foster, interview by author, February 13, 2013.
evening’s entertainment. After hearing Bublé sing Kurt Weill’s "Mack the Knife," Foster realized that there was an open "slot" for the jazz male crooner type in the music industry. This was another facet of Foster’s role as "producer," recognizing where iconic stereotype gaps, or "slots," existed within pop culture, and discovering the appropriate entertainers to fill those roles. Foster affirmed this observation, stating, "I have always believed that slots become available to fill."

Bublé stayed with the producer for three months, and the two worked on the singer’s public image and music. By this time, Foster had founded his own record label, named 143 Records, yet he still searched for financial backers to cover the costs of Bublé’s debut album. Like the recordings of Groban and Dion before him, Bublé’s self titled debut album set the young star on the course to international fame.

Producing and Philanthropy

David Foster’s career entered a new phase after he received a fateful request from his mother. Eleanor Foster had learned of a young girl from Victoria, British Columbia who was in need of a liver transplant. Foster's mother wanted her son to visit the little girl in the hospital. Upon visiting with and meeting the young girl’s family, the music producer realized that he was in a position to help, not in supplying the money for the medical costs, but in helping the family with their basic needs, such as travel and lodging.

64 Brian Mulroney was the 16th Prime Minister of Canada and has remained a longtime friend of David Foster since their meeting at Prince Charles and Princess Diana’s dinner.
65 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 153. Before Bublé, the New Orleans pianist and singer, Harry Connick Jr. had filled the industry's role of male crooner, and before Connick, Frank Sinatra had dominated the role.
66 David Foster, interview by author, March 13, 2013.
67 Following the success his first album, Bublé and Foster worked together on his next four studio albums. Bublé also appeared as a performer in Foster’s HITMAN Foster and Friends concerts.
This experience was the catalyst for the creation of *The David Foster Foundation*, a charity that provides financial support to the families of children awaiting organ transplants, while also raising organ donor awareness.\(^6^8\) For three years, Foster gathered friends and colleagues for annual celebrity softball games, raising funds to support his new foundation. He soon moved forward to producing concerts in which proceeds benefitted the foundation.

In addition to his large-scale productions supporting his foundation, Foster’s *HITMAN David Foster and Friends* performance series has helped raise money to support public television broadcasting. Showcasing a 35-year span of contributions to popular music, Foster’s first televised gala, *HITMAN David Foster and Friends*, featured many of the recording artists, whose careers the producer had helped to shape, performing his diverse pop repertoire. This 2008 concert was featured on cable television’s *Public Broadcasting System* station as one of their *Great Performance Series* pledge drives, in which the station’s viewers donated money to support the continued maintenance of the station. Foster’s concert was an unprecedented success and spawned an entire franchise. His subsequent *HITMAN David Foster and Friends* concert tours have featured many of pop music’s most in vogue artists, while introducing audiences to new emerging talents.

Foster’s contributions to public welfare were not limited to his own foundation or concert series. He has served as an impresario for numerous other functions including *Muhammad Ali’s Celebrity Fight Night*.\(^6^9\) In 1991, Foster helmed the production of *Voices*


That Care, a collaborative benefit recording that involved many leading recording artists of the day. The project supported the United States troops during Operation Dessert Storm. A 1997 artistic tribute for David Foster brought together a profuse amount of celebrities from the producer's Rolodex to raise money for charity. Philanthropists continue to utilize the impresario's far-reaching network of talent for numerous fundraising events around the globe.

David Foster has also used his song-writing and studio production talents to serve the greater good. In 1985, the single, "Tears Are Not Enough," appeared on Columbia/CBS Records' We Are the World album. Proceeds from the album, which sold millions of units, went toward famine relief in Africa and featured songs and performances by many of the decade's leading names in the pop industry. In 2002, Foster and many of his protégés were featured on Executive Visions Incorporated's (EVI) televised charity event, The Concert for World Children's Day. Foster aided EVI in the development and execution of the project, raising proceeds to benefit the Ronald McDonald House charities for children. Foster also received and Emmy Award for outstanding music and lyrics for The Concert for World Children's Day.

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70 Joel Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top Pop Singles, 1033.
71 Canadian Encyclopedia, "Tears Are Not Enough," http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/emc/tears-are-not-enough (accessed March 1, 2013). The Canadian music mogul, Bruce Allen, organized We Are the World. By 1990, the record had brought in $3.2 million for African aid. "Tears Are Not Enough" was co-written and produced by David Foster.
72 David Foster, interview by author, March 15, 2013. Foster confirmed, "I got the talent for that show with the help of my friend Michael Marto, who is a great TV and live event producer. Funny 'cause I fought ABC television to try to include Michael Bublé on the network broadcast (he was on the PBS one) and they said a flat NO."
From the closing of the twentieth century through the early years of the twenty-first century, David Foster's commercial success rose to great heights. Working in the live performance arena, Foster never abandoned studio work and he has successfully managed to navigate both spheres equally well. In 1988, he composed the theme music for the Winter Olympics. In the early 1990s, Foster received critical praise for his production on singer Natalie Cole's album, *Unforgettable . . . With Love*, followed by the colossal success of Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You." He advanced from music producer to music industry executive, becoming a vice president for *Atlantic Records* and, eventually, senior vice president for *Warner Brothers Records*. His production credits traversed music and television, and his work within both of these arenas provided Foster with an arsenal of talent and artistic tools with which he continues to shape a pop music aesthetic.

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75 Natalie Cole is an American singer and songwriter. She is the daughter of the American jazz pianist and singer, Nat King Cole.

76 Foster and Fenjves, *Hitman*, 126. In addition to his HITMAN David Foster and Friends television concerts, Foster's Christmas album was transcribed into a television format for NBC. He also worked with networks to develop *Popstars*, a television talent competition that preceded the successful *American Idol* franchise.
CHAPTER 3

APPROPRIATION IN CLASSICAL CROSSOVER MUSIC

The Italian Period

At the close of the 20th century, David Foster embarked on a new style of studio production, which he regarded as his "Italian Period." This period began when Foster joined Celine Dion with the Italian tenor, Luciano Pavarotti, for the recording of "I Hate You I Love You." Following this recording, Foster began cultivating a professional relationship with Andrea Bocelli, another Italian operatic vocalist. By the time he discovered Josh Groban, David Foster was immersed in artists who shared a more classical sensibility and a more operatic style of vocal performance. This immersion into the classical repertoire of Foster's childhood temporarily steered Foster further from the realm of rock music, moving toward the emerging industry genre of classical crossover.

Aside from its arbitrary industry definition, the classical crossover genre possesses a musical language and expression that has been codified by the genre's enthusiasts. The classical crossover artist generates a uniform style among various subgenres including hymns, opera, film scores, and show tunes. Its music relies to a great degree on a pastiche of classical conventions. Shaping the popular song into a commodity that sounds, to the untrained ear, like classical music, the crossover producer borrows classical music's

77 Foster and Fenjves, Hitman, 148.
78 Robynn J. Stilwell, "Crossover," Oxford Music Online/Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40611 (accessed February 21, 2013). Throughout the twentieth century, the term "crossover" has been used to identify artists who occasionally perform repertoire that exists outside of their standard performance genre. This somewhat capricious term is utilized by the music charts, which gather and rank the popularity of music record releases and musical artists. Within the music industry, this term defines those artists or songs that appear on more than one stylistic chart.
instrumentation, its operatic vocal style, and its melodies, transforming them into a contemporary pop song. A similar style may be achieved when contemporary lyrics are bonded to the melodies of classical compositions or instrumental film scores. In some instances, words of popular songs are converted to Italian, or other romantic languages, to give the music a seemingly more authentic "classical" sound. Referring to his work on Josh Groban's debut album, David Foster recalls suggesting this Italian language approach as a commercial device,

> When he (Groban) first came out, I was so afraid that people would not accept him, and it was all on me. He was only seventeen and it was my concept... I was so afraid that that album would be such a turn off that I wanted the whole thing to be done in Italian. It seemed more acceptable to me somehow.

Foster's immersion into the classical crossover genre was fully realized with Groban's premiere album. Yet, Foster does not believe that his musical contributions to Groban's style were so different from his stylistic contributions to the rock groups of the 1980s. Referring to his personal aesthetic, Foster asserted, "I've always been classically based, even on my Chicago records in the early '80s, I always used orchestras. It was a natural evolution to help find and nurture the 'popera' sound. It's music that is really the core of who I am." Still, it seems likely that Foster's work with Pavarotti and Bocelli influenced some of the producer's aesthetic decisions during this period, as the majority of the music is performed in Italian with stylistic features that strongly resemble the music of Italy's contemporary releases. Among these is Foster's own co-written "Gira con me questa notte," a ballad that features a piano accompaniment reminiscent of Franz Schubert's

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80 Nicola Jarvis, Classical-Crossover UK.
81 David Foster, interview with author, February 13, 2013.
82 David Foster, interview by author, March 13, 2013.

**Cultural Appropriation**

Unique musical styles and cultural expressions are found within any regional folk music. Cultural appropriation in the arts increased due to the growth of globalism throughout the 20th century and musicians within the recording industry eventually began to experiment with appropriated musical traditions. Among the most successful instances of cultural appropriation within a pop recording is Paul Simon's 1986 studio album, *Graceland*, which features the unification of American pop with various styles of South African music. Through the layering of the English language with the Zulu language and the interplay between the two musical traditions within one commercial music collage, *Graceland* was a significant contribution to recorded pop music. As *Graceland* was such a commercial success, it is no surprise that many subsequent producers have used this model of cultural appropriation within their own projects.83

It may be argued that cultural appropriation is one of the defining strands of David Foster's Italian period. With an artistic network that now included two renowned Italian vocalists, who were themselves experts of Italian opera and the Neapolitan song, Foster had a platform from which he could freely experiment with the commercial appeal of Italian music's conventions cross-fertilized with his own pop music style. Though Foster's co-penned duet, "The Prayer," featured a combination of English and Italian lyrics, Josh Groban was the first artist who Foster would fully attempt to market as a culturally

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appropriated product. This was a calculated risk for Foster, as he believed that interweaving Italy's musical customs into Groban's more operatic vocal aesthetic would be more commercially appealing.

Foster also held the role of intermediary between consumer appetites and his recording artist. The producer would have known that a market existed for this style of Italian pop music. The overwhelming sales of Bocelli's 1997 record *Romanza* suggested that a commercial market for Italian ballads did exist and was potentially ripe for exploitation.**84** Foster believes that this was part of Groban's success, revealing, "I think I got Groban to take the Bocelli spot at a time when Bocelli wasn't interested in making my kind of records."**85**

**Instilling New Context**

Among the many Italian ballads featured on Groban's debut album lay an arrangement of the final chorale J.S. Bach’s church cantata, "Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, BWV 147." At the suggestion of Foster, Groban's contemporary adaptation of Bach's work utilizes Robert Bridge's English text, and is accompanied by an electric guitar and a climax featuring bombastic percussion. This form of appropriation, in which music from a classical period is reinterpreted for a modern audience, has become common in pop music. Classical works have been given second lives within the disco music of the 1970s through the hip hop singles from the close of the 20th century, and they are obviously no stranger to the classical crossover variety.


**85** David Foster, interview by author, March 13, 2013.
Bach’s cantata was originally intended for performance within a Protestant church service during Advent, yet, through the centuries since its creation, this work has been subject to numerous arrangements and reinterpretations. By commercial music standards, it has developed into a pop song, renamed "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," yet its underlying formal, harmonic, and melodic structures have remained intact. This example highlights one of the differences between art music and popular music as a commercial distinction.

One may consider Bach's original composition a "work of art" as it was composed to inspire worship during a religious service. However, subsequent adaptations throughout the 20th century have turned the music into a commodity, available for sale in the forms of sheet music and recorded performances. By changing the intent or motivation behind the song’s origins, one alters the song's context. In changing the audience, these adaptations have also changed the context of the song. In contemporary culture, "Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring" is widely performed as a processional for wedding services. In Groban’s debut, David Foster has infused an additional layer of context to this work, transforming Bach's cantata into a power ballad to support Josh Groban as a classical crossover product.

The continued recycling and reinterpretation of pop songs has proven commercially effective for numerous pop artists and, though it is not a new phenomenon in music, it has served David Foster well. As classical crossover performers reach celebrity status, the meaning and history of their song selections become more commercially important and less artistically significant. The repertoire becomes part of the performer’s wardrobe, a means of keeping up appearances. Within the pop music industry, performers create a veneer of seriousness, establishing themselves as "classical" musicians by adapting serious
repertoire and ignoring the conventions that accompanied the original works. As long as
the songs match the overall image, the music's aesthetic value is secondary.

**From Aria to Power Ballad**

In 2009, David Foster was introduced to Jackie Evancho, a young soprano who sang
with an operatic style. Noticing her potential, Foster featured her in one of his *Foster and
Friends* concerts. In 2010, Jackie Evancho competed on *America's Got Talent*, an American
television talent competition. She performed Giacomo Puccini’s aria, "O Mio Babbino Caro," from his late opera, *Gianni Schicchi*. Evancho became an overnight classical crossover
sensation and David Foster began production work on her official debut album, *Dream
With Me*.

Foster was the appropriate producer for Evancho’s debut album, as much of her
repertoire already consisted of covers of songs Foster had produced for Josh Groban.
*Dream With Me* featured some original songs, specifically written for the young soprano,
and new arrangements of recycled pop songs, including another version of "The Prayer,"
remarketed and retitled as "A Mother’s Prayer." Like Groban’s early releases, Jackie
Evancho’s debut also features songs performed in multiple languages. Among these tracks
are two Italian arias composed by Giacomo Puccini, "O Mio Babbino Caro," an obvious
choice due to the song's role in Evancho's narrative, and "Nessun Dorma." The second
Puccini selection is also unsurprising, as David Foster has been noted to state, "I think that
'Nessun Dorma' is the greatest melody ever written. I only wish I had written it."86

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86 David Foster, interview with the author, February 13, 2013.
Appropriation is a significant operator within Foster’s production of these Puccini arias. Though Jackie Evancho’s initial performance of Puccini on *America’s Got Talent* was not Foster’s decision, he did agree that Puccini’s implementation into *Dream With Me* would be supportive to the ‘Jackie Evancho product.’ "Nessun Dorma“ becomes an interesting selection because its context is altered due to its presence in a young American girl’s debut album. The aria is borrowed from Puccini’s opera, *Turandot*. It was originally written for a male tenor, with a narrative context that is rather grim. It is to be sung by an unknown prince named Calaf, as he awaits either his beheading, or the slaughter of all of Princess Turandot’s subjects. This might seem like heavy material for a child to perform, yet in changing the performer’s gender and age, Foster and Evancho have changed the context of the song and presented a new work.

Evancho’s audience is no longer concerned with Calaf or Princess Turandot’s fate. While it is true that many consider Puccini’s melody to be very appealing, the appropriated musical material now serves to showcase the vocal dexterity of a young girl, a musical prodigy who performs repertoire that was always reserved for trained male professionals. This is not to undermine Evancho’s vocal talents, for notable critics and professionals have endorsed her unique voice and her operatic performances, but one should not ignore the context surrounding the phenomenon of Jackie Evancho. Would David Foster want to produce her album if she were an adult?

Foster did not greatly manipulate Puccini’s score, as he had with the instrumentation of Bach’s cantata. The accompanying arrangements remain relatively true to Puccini’s opera, albeit transposed to a key that supported Evancho’s range. Foster was among those in the music industry that recognized Jackie Evancho’s commercial appeal and
helped to make her debut album part of a collective franchise. One could argue, however, this may have been more of a business venture than a purely musical decision.

One recalls how Foster described his creative process as "a job." Foster's statement raises an interesting issue concerning aesthetic evaluation and musical criticism. How much weight do motivating factors that drive an artist to create a product carry when evaluating the quality and significance of the work? Clearly, the biographical stories that accompany the compositions of the classical masters can, even centuries after their deaths, add multiple layers of meaning that inform one's response to the music. One might question whether or not their response to a musical composition would change upon discovering that the only reason the recording existed is because it was "a job." To question such a notion, however, would be to question a tradition that extends far into concert music's past.

The Entrepreneur

Foster has found great success as an artistic promoter, cultivating his own career while nurturing the careers of many other musicians. However, this is not a contemporary phenomenon in music history. In fact, through his many concerts and artistic promotions, Foster continues a long tradition of artistic collaboration found throughout concert music's vast history. Many notable composers, artists, and enthusiasts successfully explored such entrepreneurial endeavors long before Foster's time.

Franz Liszt was one of the greatest musicians of the 19th century and many recognize Liszt as a composer and a pianist. Yet, if one considers his expansive career within the Romantic era, Liszt may very well have been regarded as a "producer" of his
time. Like many of the producers of the 20th century, Liszt was unafraid to change the context of preexisting musical works. An agent of appropriation in his own right, Liszt altered the context of numerous compositions with his paraphrases of Mozart and Bellini operas.\(^{87}\) Like the most successful modern musical promoters, his knowledge and promotion of other composers’ music was extensive. His career as a conductor caught the public’s attention not only because of his unorthodox conducting style, but for his unconventional concert programming as well. Liszt was an excellent intermediary between his audience’s tastes and his musical products, the essential talent in a music producer’s abilities.

History’s list of successful musical entrepreneurs was not limited to composers. It has been established that musical training is not necessary for a successful career in music production. One recalls Foster’s assertion that the only essential trait in music production is a love of music. The Russian impresario, Sergei Diaghilev, altered the history of 20th century performance art with his unique collaborations and artistic exhibitions. Commissioning many groundbreaking productions of the Ballet Russes, Diaghilev promoted the music of Igor Stravinsky, Maurice Ravel, and Claude Debussy, while introducing his audience to new innovative works of art.\(^{88}\) Nearly a century before Foster’s concerts, Sergei Diaghilev, the "producer," brought together many of the biggest names in 20th century music for grand spectacles.


The list of music history's many "producers" is not limited to Liszt and Diaghilev. The tradition can be traced through concert music's broad narrative, and one might easily identify the qualities of the producer in the careers of countless individuals from Mozart to Mahler and beyond. One must recognize that many of these classical producers relied on music for their livelihood. Their productions were their subsistence. Even those composers and performers whose music cast the largest shadow in history also crossed the stage because it was, at least in part, a job.

As the motivating power of a career is by no means a recent trend among composers, such a factor need not reduce the aesthetic value of any music. However, the development of recording technologies throughout the 20th century has changed the public's relationship to music from one of appreciation to one of massive consumption. The 20th century held witness to music's transformation from an ephemeral art form into an earthly product. It is thus no surprise that the 20th century popular song became one of the most commercially exploited and artistically manipulated of musical forms.
ARRANGING A BESTSELLING SONG

Recycling the Popular Song

The musical arrangement of preexisting works is a form of appropriation that has been widely exploited throughout the history of the music industry, specifically within the domain of the popular song. The theorist and critic Theodor Adorno believed that this phenomenon was the result of "standardization" within popular music.⁸⁹ Even though popular songs may vary in melody, harmony, and subtext, Adorno held that these "effects" served as mere distractions that allowed the listener of popular music to relax into complacency, without having to bestow any real musical value on the song. The audiences of popular styles, he argued, are consuming "pre-digested" music. In this manner, Adorno compared popular music and its audience to one giant, cooperative machine.

Adorno blamed these results on commercial popular music's competitive origins. When one popular song achieved commercial success, many other popular songs would arrive containing noticeable features from the original hit. This process generated an industry, and the cover song became a profitable product within this system.

The exploitation of the cover song, as an extremely profitable recycled product, is glaringly evident in Foster's ongoing arrangements of "The Prayer."⁹⁰ Originally penned to appear in the 1998 film, Quest for Camelot, the single eventually became one of Foster's most commercially recycled works and has been featured in the performances and recordings of many of classical crossover's most marketed artists. Foster produced

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⁹⁰ "The Prayer" was co-written by David Foster and songwriter, Carole Bayer Sager.
recordings of this song for solo albums released by Celine Dion, Andre Bocelli, Josh Groban, and Jackie Evancho. Each time "The Prayer" was appropriated into in a new narrative, the slightly altered context made the song seem like a fresh creation. The song was pushed further into the realm of merchandise when Celine Dion released a solo recording of the music, renaming it, "A Mother's Prayer," for Dion’s 2004 concept album, Miracle. This album, also produced by Foster, was sold with a book that features photographs of babies, each image joined to the context of the album’s pop songs.91 Like many of the other albums that were produced by Foster and feature arrangements of "The Prayer," Miracle sold millions of units worldwide.

Though one may not agree with Adorno's complete diagnosis regarding the state of popular music, one still recognizes many truths within his criticisms. The pop song has experienced countless varieties of appropriation and many of these examples have been driven by profits. As Adorno predicted, the commercial exploitation of the cover song has undoubtedly molded the pop song into a "pre-digested" form of entertainment.

Through the many recorded releases and performances under a single music producer, one witnesses numerous examples of these recycled raw materials. More so than classical form, David Foster has appropriated the theatric idea of classical music into a pop design and made significant contributions to a highly profitable genre. His ventures into the classical crossover cover song have set Foster apart from his contemporaries. Reflecting on this, Foster stated, "strictly classical people would think that I'm a joke, and rock people would think that I was a joke . . . I'm on the fringes of all of those things,

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91 Miracle was a collaborative effort between Dion and the Australian photographer, Anne Geddes. The idea of appropriating popular songs into the context of a photographic image could be artistically valuable, but does not serve the purpose of this document as an account of David Foster's aesthetic.
without anyone thinking that I’m great at any of them.”92 This truth leaves the music critic with little reference for evaluation. One should be careful, however, in placing any negative value judgment on these cover songs. Simon Frith, a leading academic and expert on pop music, recognizes an aesthetic difference between pop music and art music, without making these value judgments. Identifying the work of pop musicians as a craft instead of an art, Frith notes that those who work within pop music act as vehicles for catharsis, delivering music with which, upon hearing, audiences can release ordinary feelings.93 If Frith’s observations are true, then David Foster and his creative team may be regarded as master craftsmen.

**Overdubbing the Past into the Present**

The early 1990s housed two significant landmarks in David Foster’s career, and both resulted from his arrangements of cover songs. The first developed through Foster’s work with the American rhythm and blues singer, Natalie Cole. In 1990, Foster joined two other producers for Natalie Cole’s comeback album, *Unforgettable ... With Love*. The idea for the album was conceived when Natalie Cole expressed her desire to record a string of cover songs that had once been performed by her father, the popular jazz singer Nat King Cole. Natalie Cole wanted her cover version of the 1961 popular standard, "Unforgettable," to be recorded as a duet between her and an appropriated vocal solo recording of her late father.

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92 David Foster, interview by author, February 13, 2013.
father. David Foster decided to produce this track, feeling that it would be an opportunity to create great music.\textsuperscript{94}

In his biography, David Foster stated that he was not motivated by commercial success when he decided to work on this album.\textsuperscript{95} Therefore, Natalie Cole's "Unforgettable" may be evaluated as artistic product driven by musical inspiration and not commercial means. Foster produced this track through a very literal means of sound appropriation, using a recorded copy of a solo vocal track containing Nat King Cole’s performance of "Unforgettable." Copying the track onto a 24 track analogue tape, Foster and his engineer used the process of overdubbing to integrate Nat King Cole’s vocal track with new orchestration from which Natalie Cole would deliver her vocal tribute to her father.

Natalie Cole’s duet provides another example of a song gathering new layers of context through an updated arrangement. The context of the song’s lyrics become more sentimental when it is revealed that, instead of a man singing about the memorable qualities of his lover, the song is really a heartfelt obituary delivered by a daughter who will not forget her father’s memory. David Foster was awarded a Grammy for producer of the year for his work on "Unforgettable," and the album was an unexpected commercial success, selling over eight million units.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{94} Foster and Fenjves, \textit{Hitman}, 4.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 5.


Nobody Does It Alone

Following his work with Natalie Cole, Foster was asked to produce some songs for the soundtrack to the 1992 American film, *The Bodyguard*. The film starred the American actor, Kevin Costner, one of the many celebrities within Foster’s network of friends, and the pop singer, Whitney Houston. Foster was initially asked to create an arrangement of the 1966 soul ballad, "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted," yet Foster felt that this particular song was too brief. Furthermore, Whitney Houston didn’t like the first demo recording that he created. Foster was happy to discover that a British pop singer named Paul Young had also released a cover of "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted." Avoiding the release of two different covers of the same song at the same time, the team abandoned the soul ballad and decided to use Dolly Parton’s 1973 country song, "I Will Always Love You."\(^98\)

Dolly Parton performed her original single with guitar, percussion, backup singers, and a solo cello. The song’s form is framed within a popular verse-chorus structure, and Parton added dimension to her third verse by speaking her lyrics instead of singing them. However, Foster adapted his arrangement from a 1975 cover version of "I Will Always Love You," recorded by the folk and country singer, Linda Ronstadt.\(^99\) Unlike Parton’s original version, Ronstadt’s cover is introduced through a honky-tonk piano and the strings add a counterpoint to the singer’s melody beginning in the second verse. Removing the vocals from the third verse, Ronstadt instead featured an instrumental crescendo that builds to a final chorus (figure 6).

\(^{97}\) “What Becomes of the Broken Hearted” was first recorded by the American soul singer, Jimmy Lee Ruffin, on Motown Records.

\(^{98}\) Foster and Fenyes, *Hitman*, 12. Kevin Costner suggested that Foster use Parton’s song, after learning that "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted" wouldn’t work.

\(^{99}\) Linda Ronstadt included her cover of Dolly Parton’s single in her 1975 album, "Prisoner in Disguise."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
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<th>MAIN INSTRUMENTATION</th>
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<td>Piano</td>
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<td>A Major</td>
<td>0:08 - 0:38</td>
<td>G# 4</td>
<td>Piano, Bass Drum Beat (after 4 bars)</td>
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<td>Chorus (B)</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>0:39 - 1:02</td>
<td>C# 5</td>
<td>Pedal Steel, Piano, Drums, Guitar, Choir</td>
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<td>A Major</td>
<td>1:03 - 1:31</td>
<td>G# 4</td>
<td>Piano, Drums, Pedal Steel, Strings (after 4 bars)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A Major</td>
<td>1:32 - 1:52</td>
<td>C# 5</td>
<td>Piano, Drums, Pedal Steel, Strings, Choir, Guitar</td>
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<td>Instrumental Break (A)</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>1:53 - 2:17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Piano, Drums, Pedal Steel, Strings, Guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus (B)</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>2:18 - 2:45</td>
<td>E 5</td>
<td>Piano, Drums, Pedal Steel, Strings, Choir, Guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outro</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>2:46 - 3:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Piano, Pedal Steel, Strings, Drums</td>
</tr>
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Figure 6. Ballad Structure in Linda Ronstadt's "I Will Always Love You."  

The arrangement for Whitney Houston's cover of "I Will Always Love You" was somewhat of a collaborative effort. Upon first hearing the country hit, David Foster had devised his own framework for Whitney Houston's cover. However, Kevin Costner made an artistic suggestion. The actor wanted the first verse to be performed and recorded a cappella, with no accompaniment until the first statement of the chorus. Foster thought that this was a bad idea, yet he created a demo version using Costner's idea and a session vocalist, Nita Whitaker, for the opening solo. Foster incorporated his power ballad format, gradually building layer upon layer of instrumentation, leading to a grand musical caesura before modulating to the final chorus. Foster confessed that this pause before the modulation provided the essential ingredient he needed for the song's success. Foster

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also revealed that his treatment of "I Will Always Love You" underlines his personal aesthetic, defining what he believes are the important qualities of a pop song,

I’m very obsessed with the arc of the song, because a song is a little three or four-minute journey that you are going to take someone on, so, I’m really surprised when people miss this element. It’s such an important element, the arc of the song. That is why I always have those moments in my songs, like, the best example would be the big boom in "I Will Always Love You," which I produced, I didn’t write. I crafted it out of a little country song to make this great arc that didn't exist in the song so that the audience would have that OMG (Oh my God) moment and then it changes keys and then she’s hitting the money note. That is what I try to do in my songs, and that is what I look for when I am just trying to enjoy a song that someone else wrote. I want it to take me on a little journey and lift me up and then take me down and lift me up and then take me down. That is one description of what I believe makes a great song.  

Circumstance determined the form of Foster’s cover. As he had originally used Linda Ronstadt’s cover as a template, he didn't know about Dolly Parton's lyrics for the third verse. Foster learned about these lyrics during the rehearsal for the film's scene in which Whitney Houston performs "I Will Always Love You" for a live audience. Foster stopped the rehearsal and quickly added the third verse to follow the instrumental solo, resulting in an ABABA'AB structure (figure 7).

The musicians performed live for the filming of this pivotal scene, and Foster also directed the musicians. Whitney Houston added her own improvised vocal style to the song’s melody, coloring Parton’s phrases with soulful vocal runs. Foster’s treatment of form along with the expanded vocal range, a result of the upward modulation, transformed "I Will Always Love You," from a sentimental country song, into an augmented R&B power ballad. The song’s pivotal role within the movie also added an extra dimension of context that didn’t exist in any previous cover version of the song.

103 David Foster, interview by author, February 13, 2013.
<table>
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<th>SECTION</th>
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<th>HIGHEST VOCAL PITCH</th>
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<td>1:06 - 1:17</td>
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<td>Guitar, Strings, Percussion Texture, Synth Keyboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 2 (A)</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>1:17 - 1:45</td>
<td>A 5</td>
<td>Guitar, Strings, Drums, Synth Keyboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus (B)</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>1:46 - 2:07</td>
<td>E 5</td>
<td>Guitar, Strings, Drums, Synth Keyboard</td>
</tr>
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<td>Instrumental Break (A')</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>2:08 - 2:35</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saxophone, Strings, Drums, Synth Keyboard</td>
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<td>C# 5</td>
<td>Strings, Drums, Synth Keyboard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:05 - 3:08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus (B)</td>
<td>B Major</td>
<td>3:09 - 3:49</td>
<td>F# 5</td>
<td>Guitar, Strings, Forte Drums, Synth Keyboard, Saxophone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outro</td>
<td>B Major</td>
<td>3:50 - 4:31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strings, Percussion Texture, Synth Keyboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Power Ballad Structure in Whitney Houston’s "I Will Always Love You."\(^{104}\)

Foster and his team edited the live recording of "I Will Always Love You" in the music studio. Foster’s engineer created a rough mix for Clive Davis, the founder of Arista Records, the label that released the soundtrack to *The Bodyguard*.\(^{105}\) Although Foster had intended on making additional adjustments to the rough mix, including adjusting Houston’s vocal reverb and balancing the instrumental dynamics, Clive Davis insisted on keeping the rough mix exactly as it was. In spite of the fact that he was unsatisfied with this mix, Foster had to surrender his final artistic vision to the record executive’s demand, and the rough mix was mastered and released as the final product.


\(^{105}\) David Metzer, "Power Ballad," 442. Metzer notes that Clive Davis may have been the first in the industry to coin the label "power ballad" when referring to the music of Barry Manilow.
Clive Davis' ear had not been wrong. Whitney Houston's cover of "I Will Always Love You" remained at Billboard's number one slot for fourteen consecutive weeks.\textsuperscript{106} *The Bodyguard Soundtrack* received the Grammy Award for album of the year and remains among the bestselling albums of all time. Through the seemingly fatalistic circumstances surrounding the song's creation, "I Will Always Love You" united David Foster with some of the most influential celebrities and personalities in commercial pop music to create an unprecedented event in pop music history.

David Metzer stresses the importance of "I Will Always Love You," as a power ballad genre defining song, writing, "There is perhaps no clearer, or bigger, example than Whitney Houston's cover version of Dolly Parton's 'I Will Always Love You.' Even by the standards of the genre, the scale of Houston's recording is imposing."\textsuperscript{107} Metzer also notes interesting opposing forces at work within Houston's recording and in other power ballads. The pairing of sorrowful sentiment, as expressed in the lyrics, with musical excitement should create aesthetic conflict. Yet, working together, these forces move the listener in unexpected ways. Combining sorrow with excitement, the power ballad becomes a surprising medium for catharsis.

\textsuperscript{106} Joel Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn's Top Pop Singles*, 455.
\textsuperscript{107} David Metzer, "Power Ballad," 440.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Value in David Foster’s Style

Adorno lamented the mass production of popular music styles, fearing that these products held "unconscious" devices that actually betray its listeners, forcing them back into an "infantile stage." The "fetishized" forms of pop music, Adorno noted, are substitutes for real music, and listeners eventually become dependent on these impostors, mistaking them for authentic experiences. Consumers of pop become addicted to the prescribed context held within the recycled songs, but they are only temporarily satisfied and quickly seek their next fix, disguised as the latest pop anthem. They become addicts of inauthenticity. According to Adorno's assessment, consumers of pop have become part of a giant machine, destined to devour itself.108 Echoes of Plato's warnings resound in Adorno's criticism. In his Republic, Plato warned of music's power to manipulate the emotions, rendering its listeners unable to reason properly.109 Though these accusations may seem to align with a modern criticism of commercial forms, one still questions if pop music might be redeemed.

It is in the producer's final creation, the pop celebrity as a singular product, that absolution may be found. The amalgamation of song, style, performance, and narrative culminate into a unified whole, an idea through which the masses may release their despair, their fear, and their pity. This holistic pastiche of many art forms of the past and

present, presents its audience with a true expression of postmodern theatre.\textsuperscript{110} As Aristotle speculated, these experiences, recycled for the modern era as manufactured products of entertainment, may provide the necessary vehicles for social catharsis. Regardless of the inauthenticity held within the external forms of these appropriated products, the context, bestowed upon a pop artist through a carefully crafted alliance between producer and consumer, becomes the most valuable creation. Perhaps no one is closer to this truth than the producer, the one who interprets his culture's desires and makes them manifest.

Compared to other music producers, Foster may appear more motivated by success than by music, but this is not easy to determine. There are plenty of music producers who will defend their albums as the result of aesthetic inspiration, motivated by a need to express artistic concepts.\textsuperscript{111} There are probably just as many producers who simply enjoy music and appreciate the lifestyle. Foster does admit that he does not receive inspiration from external sources and defines his process as motivated by "a job," yet this alone does not carry enough weight to diminish the value of his product. Most of the great composers of the past worked for commission, producing many works that were conceived as "jobs," and yet that truth does not diminish the value of their music. Perhaps David Foster describes his creative process as "a job" because he has always approached music as such. Even as a young boy managing the finances of The Starbright Combo, Foster regarded music as a career and his attitude has not changed. Foster has maintained this career


because he is good at his craft, shaping music that panders to his vast audience. His ability to recognize musical trends and refresh dated material is notable. His manipulation of the power ballad is an achievement. Obviously, these are products that cater to specific tastes, but one can admire the man who has established a remarkably successful career doing what he loves most, making music.

David Foster provides an interesting case study. From his political talents, satisfying the requests of the largest egos in the entertainment industry, to his artisanship, refining the smallest details within a musical recording, he has governed an enormous spectrum of music production. David Foster's experiences within the spheres of commercial creation and artistic abstraction present a subject who exists at two opposing extremes and yet manages both with great finesse.

If one is to base a value judgment on an artist's presence within either of these spheres, then certain aspects of David Foster's contributions must be valuable. Holding one foot in each realm, David Foster is sure to meet at least one of the criteria determining worth. It is a decision, however, to be made by those who hold witness to his products, those who listen to his recorded creations, and those whose emotions are stimulated by his live spectacles. It is a verdict to be determined by the individual.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1 - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

The following recorded transcripts document the author's interviews with music producer David Foster. Foster provided additional insight into his history and shared personal opinions regarding music production and the classical crossover genre. Foster has given his written and verbal consent to being interviewed, recorded, and published within this document.

David Foster Phone Interview
Composer, Songwriter, Music Producer
Telephone Interview, February 13, 2013; 11:15am PST

Matthew Evancho: Within music academia there is a lot of resistance to popular music. I think that composer/producer/performers like you aren't studied enough for what they are doing now...

David Foster: You know the dirty little secret, our dirty little secret is, I mean, not that sales are everything, and they certainly aren't, no great artist will ever say that they don't care whether their shit sells or not, the strange thing is that in my entire career, I always, pretty much sold more CDs than anybody, with some exceptions. Now, when the rappers first came along and they were selling two million units, we were selling twenty-five million units with Celine Dion. And, not that rap music is bad, it's just kind of funny that here we are, Josh Groban has the number one album this week, we had the number one album last week with Andrea Bocelli, and we're still just outselling everybody.

ME: You make a good point that your music is what everybody is responding to . . .

DF: It's called pop music, which stands for popular . . .
ME: Right, and I don't know why academia is resistant towards that because Bernstein did it and Gershwin did it and we study those composers now. I think it just takes a little bit of time before they are ready to accept it . . .

DF: Yeah, and yet you can still take a song like 'Rhapsody in Blue' and still the average person only knows it from the United Airlines commercial...

ME: When you write a song, whether it is for lyrics or if it is something for a movie, what is your process? Do you use staff paper? Do you sit at the piano?

DF: My process has always been that it is a job. The notion that you are looking at a sunset and you get inspired and you run to the piano, while I know that works for some people and I've heard of that working for some people, it's never worked for me. There have only been one or two times that I've been inspired other than being at my piano and it wasn't necessarily because I was looking at something. I was driving and I went, 'oh that's a good melody. I wonder if it's mine or not,' and you scramble to jot it down or put it on your phone or somewhere, you get home and you get to work on it. So, my process is that, if I know that I have to write a song for a movie or for an artist, or just because I haven't written one in a while and I better get on it, I go to the piano and I play. My saying is that good is the enemy of great, and it so easy for someone like myself to be good, because I was born with a talent and I can pretty much be good any day of my life, but to be great, that's the challenge, because good is like "Oh that's a nice song but it's not gonna do anything, it's not gonna wow anyone, it's not gonna make any noise. It's just a good song." So, my challenge is, to sit at that piano, as a job, and try to be great. And that's what I try to do every single time that I work, whether it be in making a record, or sitting at the piano and writing a song. And then, you just wait for those great moments and they don't happen that
often, but when they do, like the writer of a great book, when everything is flowing and it comes through you and not from you, you can't stop, the pen is going faster, the pen's going faster than you can write the words, the same is true with music. Most of my really good songs, I hesitate to say great cause that sounds like bragging, most of my really good songs have come really, really fast, but the one's you toil over, they never amount to shit.

ME: When you write, what do you listen for? I know you are a perfectionist, so what formal elements really grab your attention when you hear them that makes you think, "wow, that's great?"

DF: I'm very obsessed with the arc of the song, because a song is a little 3 or 4-minute journey that you are going to take someone on, so, I'm really surprised when people miss this element. It's such an important element, the arc of the song. That is why I always have those moments in my songs, like, the best example would be the big boom in "I Will Always Love You," which I produced I didn't write. I crafted it out of a little country song to make this great arc that didn't exist in the song so that the audience would have that OMG moment and then it changes keys and then she's hitting the money note. So that is what I try to do in my songs and that is what I look for when I am just trying to enjoy a song that someone else wrote. I want it to take me on a little journey and lift me up and then take me down and lift me up and then take me down. That is one description of what I believe makes a great song.

ME: Have you been influenced a lot by Romantic music?

DF: I most definitely have. Like Tchaikovsky! Listen to those melodies! They just sweep you away. Now, interestingly, my second favorite composer, melodically, the first being Puccini, is Rachmaninoff. Those melodies just take my breath away! When you think about
it, there are only twelve notes and it's all been done before. We're just stealing and borrowing from all of those who have gone before us. There's nothing new as far as those twelve note configurations.

**ME: Did you study any music theory etc. growing up?**

DF: My Dad taught me how to play Ragtime piano and dance music and then at the same time I was fortunate enough to take classical piano lessons for eight years which was a great foundation for me and then I had school band, and I can't overemphasize how important school band is. I talk to a lot of my contemporaries now and they all say, 'oh yeah, I played with the school band or the school choir.' It's just a great groundwork for having a wider knowledge of what you need to know. My classical training on piano! I've relied on it my whole life. I was not a great classical pianist, I probably wasn't even a good classical pianist, and I always say that I'm glad I wasn't a great classical pianist because if I had been, I probably would have been number 450 in the world, and living making 20 grand a year, looking for gigs. So, thank God I wasn't good enough to be great, let alone great enough to be world class. But, that training that I got with eight years of classical piano has served me more than anything else that I could ever imagine because, and I think that's what allowed me to get into classical crossover so I could do records like Bocelli, or Jackie (Evancho), or Groban. I don’t want to trick people into thinking that they are having a 'classical experience,' but when you hear Bocelli and Celine sing "The Prayer," for a lot of people, that is a classical moment.
ME: Does it bother you when people try to put you into a genre box or stick you in a musical category?

DF: I’m kind of in the cracks everywhere. Strictly Classical people would think that I’m a joke, and rock people would think that I was a joke . . . I’m on the fringes of all of those things, without anyone thinking that I’m great at any of them.

Why would someone put their nose up at what I do? It’s sort of an interesting phenomenon. You know that the greats like Beethoven and Bach, they’d be slamming it (their scores) with drum machines. I believe that they must have been frustrated that they couldn’t get all of the rhythms out of the orchestras that they wanted because it’s tough to get an orchestra to play rhythmically, it’s really tough. I think they would have gone crazy with drum machines.

There are people, like Lang Lang or Chris Botti, who does embrace what I do. Chris Botti is probably the best jazz trumpeter alive right now, in my opinion. He embraces what I do. He gets it and Lang Lang gets it.

The Symphony Sessions were my best shot at trying to get serious. Most of them are mine, a lot of co-writes, I wrote with other people. They are all instrumentals. I wrote some of them by myself. I orchestrated a couple and I had orchestrators help as well. But, it was my best effort, at least 20 years ago.

ME: Did you use a synthesizer to try to get the orchestra sounds?

DF: No, I went right from the piano to the page.
ME: So how do you see yourself? Are you a composer? A Songwriter?

DF: I could answer that a few different ways. I wake up on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and think that I’m the greatest thing ever. Tuesdays, Thursday, and Saturdays I think I suck and I’ve accomplished nothing and I’m a joke and a fraud, and Sunday’s I try not to think about it. And I thing that’s a common thread among successful people, that from time to time we think that we’re just fooling everybody, and maybe that’s the insecurities of being an artist. But on another note, I think I know my place in the music business. I think that pop music would sound slightly different today if I hadn't been born. I think I really created a sound in the eighties that propelled the power ballad, or whatever you want to call it. I was responsible or at least partially responsible for that sound. So, I think I altered the course of music slightly and, in the end, when I look at people like, or when I go to an event and people like Elton was there, Bruce Springsteen and all those people, I just thought ’man I'm just not part of that A-list group at all.’ Here I am, I got 16 Grammys, but I’m really not part of that, and a lot of my artists feel that way too. Michael Bublé and Josh Groban, they feel like they've been axed out of the mainstream glory as well, but I don’t know whether there is truth to that, I guess there is. You know, I don't think that Springsteen is going around talking about me.

ME: How do you feel about the term 'crossover’?

DF: Well, let’s take Josh Groban. He has a real dilemma because he grew up listening to Radiohead, and Rage Against the Machine, and all these eclectic great bands, and that’s the kind of music that he loves. But, lo and behold, when he opened his mouth, that Josh Groban sound is what came out. It’s frustrating for him because he wants to be a rocker and on the cover of Rolling Stone, but his voice dictates that he has to be a crossover artist,
so he’s a very frustrated individual. I believe he could have been a great opera singer if that’s what he wanted to do. If he had studied, he could have been a great lyrical baritone. He’s got an amazing voice. When he first came out, about 14 years ago when I did his first album, I was so afraid that people would not accept him, and it was all on me. He was only 17 and it was my concept. I arranged the album, I picked the songs, and I pretty much made him do what I wanted him to do. I was so afraid that that album would be such a turnoff, I wanted the whole thing to be done in Italian. It seemed more acceptable to me somehow. We snuck in a couple of English songs, and lo and behold, 13 years later, it’s so acceptable to hear Josh Groban on the radio with that voice. 13 years ago it certainly wasn’t.

**ME:** Are you a big Puccini fan?

**DF:** Monstrously, which brings me to another point. I always laugh when people rag on Andrew Lloyd Webber and say he stole his shit from Puccini. By the way, that shit’s available for anyone to steal. His melodies are brilliant. Andrew Lloyd Webber is probably your best case study ever because he’s totally in the crossover world, but you listen to melodies like "Music of the Night," or "All I Ask of You," "Love Changes Everything," even the melody from *Phantom Two*, this guy has written some great melodies. Whether he borrowed from Puccini or not, I could give a shit because they're beautiful melodies. But nobody gets ragged on more than him.

**ME:** And I don't know why it bothers people because so many of the great composers borrowed from other composers.

**DF:** They say professionals borrow and amateurs steal . . . people like my brother in law, who is a truck driver, he goes to see *Phantom of the Opera* and he thinks he's had a classical
opera experience. He loves *Phantom of the Opera* and he says, 'wow this classical shit is really great!' You know though, if he went to *La Bohème*, he'd probably be bored . . .

**ME:** What do you think people like him find boring about that opera music?

DF: It's just the pop twist that Andrew can put on it . . . even with the classics, it can get tiresome for us musicians. I'll go watch a night of Beethoven or Schubert or Brahms, and there are times where you're like 'okay...' or 'come on.' Those guys weren't perfect. They were far from perfect. So, anytime you can make it better for the audience and make it easier for them to absorb a classical-ish kind of experience, I think it's fantastic! It's show business.

**ME:** Do the added theatrics in concerts ever bother you though? Do you ever feel as though the music is being threatened?

DF: No, I don't. I mean, you've seen what I do. I work in my basement. There's no magic. It's work and people will dissect it to the nth degree.

**ME:** Are you comfortable with me saying that you have an updated Puccini sound?

DF: I think that's the biggest compliment anyone could ever say. I think that "Nessun Dorma" is the greatest melody ever written. I only wish I had written it.
Matthew Evancho: Did you learn to program synthesizers yourself, or from other musicians like Gary Wright? Do you often do the synthesizer programming yourself, or do you hire programmers to do it?

David Foster: I never learned to program, although Gary Wright was the first person to really turn me on to synths. I always thought my brain was too full to add programming to the list. It takes the focus away from music.

ME: What was your involvement in the synthesizer programming for "Somewhere?" you mention in your book that you worked with many programmers. Do you remember the equipment/technique you used? Did you make some of the sounds yourself or did you describe what you wanted to the programmers?

DF: For "Somewhere" I used 7 different programmers over a month long period. All the synths were monophonic (one note at a time) so chords had to be built. Barbra said to me that she wanted it to sound like it was not created on this planet so that's what we did--no orchestra--just synths.

ME: Were you influenced by Gary Wright's "Dream Weaver" when you chose a freeform synthetic introduction for Streisand's "Somewhere?"

DF: see answer #1

ME: What kind of recording equipment did you first begin working with (around the time you produced Jaye P Morgan)? Early on, did you do the mixing yourself, or did you hire engineers?
DF: I always had engineers--good ones--they are super important to a project--back in those days of JP Morgan we used Neve boards before automation--when we were mixing, it sometimes took 4 pair of hands to make the moves cause you had to do it in a complete pass--pretty interesting.

ME: Do you have a preference for a specific number of multi-track recorder or specific recording equipment? Do you prefer to work with Logic or Protools or other software? What equipment do you use for your home studio?

DF: I work with Jochem Vandersaag and he uses Cubase. I don’t know how it works, but I know I have unlimited tracks. I don’t abuse that privilege, though. I only put on my records stuff that is actually going to make the final mix. I don’t like extra stuff. I make my mind up on the spot.

ME: How was the transition for you when recording became more digitized? Did your recording style change with the development of new recording technologies? Did you stick to what you knew, or did you always incorporate the latest new recording technologies?

DF: I went kicking and screaming into the digital age, but I’m there now. It just makes things easier. It doesn’t help the music (at least my kind of music). The only thing I’ve gotten lazy with is my piano playing because it’s so easy to fix the timing with a push of a button.

ME: You work a lot with Humberto Gatica. Do you also do a lot of the mixing and engineering?
DF: Humberto is a great engineer. He would always get the mix to 90 percent without my help, and then I would add my extra 10%. Everyone has their own little details that they worry about.

**ME:** Do you have a specific way you like the recording studio to be arranged? Do you have a particular mic setup, etc? Obviously it depends on the artist you are recording, but are there any particular tricks you use or examples you can give?

DF: No tricks. You can now make a record anywhere. People always think we're making magic but we just go to work everyday and do what comes natural to us. People dissect our music and ask us questions to which we don't have answers cause we don't know how we do it. It's not that we won't share the information, we just don't know how to.

**ME:** How often do you find artists through A & R? Often it seems like you meet your most successful artists through friends or by chance.

DF: Not often thru A and R, because that's what I do. However, its great to have people like my sister and Jay Landers, who are also A and R people. I need them to help me find songs, and to really walk the project all the way through to the end, and then some. People think that when the album is done, my job is done, but there’s much more to do after that, helping put a band together, styling, image, TV shows, tours, events, anything we can do to exploit the product.

**ME:** I noticed stylistic changes with your music, beginning in your "Italian Period." It seems like you moved more towards classical crossover. Was the shift influenced by your artistic relationship with Pavarotti and Bocelli?
DF: I've always been classically based, even on my Chicago records in the early 80's. I always used orchestras. It was a natural evolution to help find and nurture the "popera" sound. It's music that is really the core of who I am.

**ME:** Do proceeds from the Foster and Friends Concerts go to other charities in addition to supporting PBS? Do any of the proceeds go towards your Foundation?

DF: Always to PBS. Public TV is very important to this country and its well being. It's one of the few places that you can sit your child or your grandparent down and know absolutely that it will be quality programming--no risk--its also one of the few places that my kind of music can get attention.

**ME:** Were you responsible for finding the talent for the World Children's Day Concert?

DF: Yes, I got the talent for that show with the help of my friend Michael Marto, who is a great TV and live event producer. Funny cause I fought ABC television to try to include Michael Bublé on the network broadcast (he was on the PBS one) and they said a flat NO--

**ME:** Did you arrange and produce "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" for Groban's first album? Was it your idea to bring in the big drums, electric guitar, and Lili Haydn?

DF: Yes

**ME:** How is the process recording artists like Jackie Evancho or Andrea Bocelli different from recording artists with a rock background? Is it more challenging since the nuance of the vocal track is so important?

DF: Its been so long since I worked with a rock act but looking back at my time with The Tubes and Alice Cooper, I’d have to say the process is the same--artists and styles change--I don’t.
ME: In what ways have you shaped the image a recording artist for the public? In your book, you mention that you noticed a void in pop music that had once been filled by Sinatra and Harry Connick Jr, and tailored Bublé to fill that void. Are there other artists for whom you feel that you've created a specific image?

DF: I think I got Groban to take the Bocelli spot at a time when Bocelli wasn't interested in making my kind of records--you could argue that Jackie (Evancho) is taking the Sara Brightman spot. I have always believed that slots become available to fill.
APPENDIX 2 - PERMISSIONS

LETTER OF PERMISSION - OF SUBJECT DAVID FOSTER

Louisiana State University
Attn: Matthew Evancho PhD Dissertation Research Committee

I, David Foster, grant Matthew Evancho permission to research and write about my body of musical compositions and musical production work for his PhD dissertation at Louisiana State University.

Signed:

Date: 1/24/12
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Mar 21, 2013

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VITA

Matthew Evancho received his Bachelor of Science in Music Education degree from Duquesne University in 2002 and his Master of Music degree from Carnegie Mellon University in 2008. He has taught as an Adjunct Professor of Eurhythmics at Duquesne University and as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Point Park University. Evancho has also served on the faculty of Slippery Rock University and within the North Allegheny School District of Pittsburgh, PA.

Evancho has received composition commissions from the Grammy Award winning sextet, eighth Blackbird, the Carnegie Mellon Contemporary Ensemble, and the Louisiana Sinfonietta. In 2011, his pop anthem, "To Believe," was produced by David Foster and released on Jackie Evancho’s official debut album, Dream With Me. Since its release, the song has been arranged for sacred choir and released through Hal Leonard Publishing. The lyrics for "To Believe" have been used in a charity campaign spearheaded by Philosophy® cosmetics with proceeds benefitting WhyHunger®. Matthew Evancho is completing his PhD in music composition at Louisiana State University under the tutelage of Dinos Constantinides.