Summary of the Expanding the Canon for Art Song Literature Classes Initiative:

The NATS Art Song Committee embarked on a project of re-imagining a Song Literature course in summer of 2021. After discussions over the 2020-2021 academic year, we concluded that as the nation is embarking on acknowledging underrepresented realities, NATS, as an organization, is also called to examine our practices in academia and how we can serve our students through a more inclusive lens.

We began with NATS Executive Director Allen Henderson's vision, who then sent a survey to every NATS teacher registered/designated as teaching Song Literature. The survey asked about the type of institution where faculty were employed: 2 years, 4 years, or those including master and/or doctorate degrees. It also inquired about whether the curricular model was 1 semester, 2 semesters, more than 2 semesters, or if there were specialty Art Song courses offered.

Colleagues were invited to indicate interest in being a part of a Syllabus or Resources working groups. We analyzed this data, and it informed our approach to the project. We collected voluntarily shared syllabi, learning outcomes, and thoughts from those currently teaching this course. The Committee ultimately expanded to six different working groups, all of which contributed suggestions, repertoire, and thoughts on the different modules

Our current canon is important and valued by all. Our committee's goal was to build upon existing syllabi and branch out to include more points of view, introducing our students to a broader canon, much of which has been largely neglected.

We decided to construct an initial new syllabus based on modules and a case-study approach. As the typical Song Literature courses are structured by language and historical periods, we sought to look at an alternative approach. The course we are suggesting is based on six different modules: Art Song and Love, Art Song and Nationalism, Art Song and Colonialism, Art Song and Nature, Art Song and Oppression, and Art Song: Character and Identity vs. Raconteur. We are including an extensive suggested resources page, which will be available on these resource pages on NATS.org.

We can imagine that this is a living working document which will continue to build and grow in the future. As Song Literature is a labor-intensive course to teach, we are hopeful that both current and future faculty members can lean into this syllabus for support and resources.