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**Voicing Rupture: resisting docility through
performances of feminine agency in Arnold
Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten***

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Abstract

My experience of learning and performing Arnold Schoenberg's song cycle, *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, can be explored through the lens of Foucault's 'docile bodies' theory – that is, bodies that are 'subjected, used, transformed, improved'. Participating in the disciplinary practice of self-policing, my obedience to the social, cultural and musical orders shaping western art song performance is enforced through self-imposed internalisation of normative practices and values. The singer's body – my own body – is regulated in the Foucauldian sense; 'disciplined' through training and conditioning to align with normative practices, and, simultaneously, I act as 'discipliner' through self-imposed policing and monitoring of my body. The compulsive need to engage in the acts and processes of discipline implies inherent deficiency or deviance; the body must be transformed and 'corrected' through the processes of discipline that reflect the internalised value systems a body is measured against.

In this exegesis, I explore my processes of self-regulation as disciplined and discipliner, investigating an intersection of ideals and tensions in my pursuit of technical command of vocal technique, obedience to the score, and the expectation of emotional abandon that an expressionist song cycle demands. Framed through narratives of 'service' and 'prohibition', I position the political anatomy of an eroticised, reproductive female body, exploring resistance and 'rupture' through the sexual agency of a disobedient and disruptive female singer.

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