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Singing Stylistically with Different Vocal Techniques

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An Annotated Bibliography

If music is a language, style is a dialect. Musical styles – or in this case, musical dialects - should be easily accessible to musicians. I believe that as musicians in the 21st century, it is important to have versatile performance practices. This is common amongst instrumentalists but less common with vocalists. My paper will examine the development of vocal techniques to discover the similarities and differences between classical and popular singing. The intention is to prompt what makes the techniques different and whether there can be a healthy crossover.

Bunch, Meribeth. *Dynamics of the Singing Voice*. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1995.

This book discusses the physiological perspective required for healthy singing. The focus of this source is on the physical functions of the singing voice, regardless of style. Bunch informs the reader on how the singing voice functions and common problems that can occur. This can be used as a common denominator for vocal techniques.

Child, Fred. "Renée Fleming: 'Haunted Heart'" NPR Music. Accessed October 29, 2019. Published June 3, 2005. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4676925>

This source offers a few recordings of renowned opera singer Renée Fleming singing in a jazz style. These examples offer up the question of whether this can be considered jazz singing. She stays true to her technique and vocal style while also branching out into other genres of singing. However, her approach might not be stylistic as she is not using the technique required for this type of singing.

Fitzpatrick, John. "Farrell, Eileen" *American National Biography*. Accessed 29 October 2019.

In 1971, the esteemed opera singer Eileen Farrell was hired to teach at Indiana University. After having a long, successful career in opera she began teaching young singers. Yet, her approach included jazz singing and classical singing. She often prompted her students to sing less opera in order to not damage their voices. She coined the term "crossover" to say that jazz and classical singing are no different.

Huizenga, Tom. "Thomas Quastoff: A Mighty 'Voice' Soars." NPR Music. Accessed October 29, 2019. Published August 12, 2007.
<https://www.npr.org/2008/08/12/93513173/thomas-quasthoff-a-mighty-voice-soars>

The author writes about Thomas Quastoff's voice while also including two contrasting recordings of him singing a gospel piece vs a J.S. Bach piece. In both recordings, the listener can tell he is the same person. He is a good example of singing different styles with the same healthy technique. The consistency of vocal health that Quastoff uses is just one of many examples about the possibilities of singing different styles.

LaPine, Peter R. "The Relationship Between the Physical Aspects of Voice Production and Optimal Vocal Health." *Music Educators Journal* 94, no.3 (2008): 24-29.

This article has quite a bit in common with Susan Turner's article. Both encourage healthy singing habits and approach vocal health in the perspective of anybody who uses their voice often. What is important to note about these two articles is that neither mention a specific type of singing, they solely focus on maintaining a healthy voice. The main difference is that this article is aimed towards educators of young singers in a classroom setting.

Lebon, Rachel L. *The Versatile Vocalist*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006.

This book mentions singing methods of various styles. The author herself is a reputable trained singer as well. She is an expert in the field who advocates for singers to branch out and be versatile while also discussing the differences in techniques. Lebon uses an approach that respects the differences required to stay true to the style, while also promoting healthy singing.

Oakland, Jane. "Negotiating an 'Opera Singer Identity'." In *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*, edited by Scott D. Harrison and Jessica O'Bryan, 221-233. New York: Springer, 2014.

This essay focuses on the importance of how musicians identify themselves. An interesting point made in this chapter is that concept of "cross-over artist" which I noticed in the source about Eileen Farrell. This chapter discusses that a musician's label of what type of music they play has different connotations by different people. Yet, this same label can both benefit and inhibit the musician's opportunities for success. This conversation on identity is crucial to how we approach what it means to be a professional singer.

Plotkin, Fred. "Singing Opera, and All That Jazz" WQXR. Accessed October 29, 2019. Published August 16, 2017. <https://www.wqxr.org/story/singing-opera-and-all-jazz/>

This post is crucial to my topic as it names several musicians who are famous for performing in different genres of music. The key point is the stylistic performance that they offer. This list includes artists who are known for their musicality rather than for being experts in one field.

Stoner-Hawkins, Sylvia. "McDonald, Audra [Ann]" *Oxford Music Online*. Accessed 29 October 2019.

Singers today mostly study one specific style such as classical or jazz or musical theater, but it is uncommon for one singer to study all three. Audra McDonald is well-known as a “crossover artist” who has won awards for performances in Broadway musicals and films. She is a trained classical singer which makes her a great candidate for this topic. “Stephen Holden of the *New York Times* observes that her vocal abilities “glide so seamlessly between a semi-operatic lyricism and a pop-blues gutsiness.””

Turner, Susan. “The Effects of Voice Disorders Among Singers: A Study of Causes, Symptoms, Treatment, and Prevention of Voice Disorders Among Professional Voice Users.” Master’s Thesis, University of Louisville, 1999.

The interesting aspect about this thesis is that Turner discusses vocal health in terms of a professional vocal user rather than a “trained singer”. This includes people whose professions involve speaking often. She compares the effects of vocal misuse on a developed voice and a developing voice. This source can be used very broadly for my topic, but the in-depth details are outdated in terms of today’s pedagogical approach to vocal health. The importance here is the healthy voice habits that she encourages.

Vaccari, Nicola. *Practical Method of Italian Singing for High Soprano*. Translated and Edited by John Glenn Paton. G. Schirmer, 1986.

Vaccari books are traditional singing style method books whose purpose are for learning classical repertoire. To be even more detailed, this book teaches *bel canto* singing, common in opera. I propose that this book has valuable information on how to sing rather than just for its intended purpose. The editor writes how this book is meant to teach how to sing but then it specifies the style. Maybe this source can be categorized under an expert of *bel canto* opera singing rather than just singing in general.

Winnie, Brian J. "Bridging the Gap between Classical and Contemporary Vocal Technique: Implications for the Choral Rehearsal." *Voice and Speech Review* 11, no.1 (2017): 55-71

Breath pressure, airflow, and onset are three of the main topics of this article.

Winnie thoroughly explains how these three topics can differ within themselves and across style. Ultimately, he argues the same point as other authors in that healthy singing is always the goal no matter the style. He makes a point to mention that some techniques used in CCM could be beneficial and more suitable for classical singing and vice versa.